

Engl. Theat: 773
vol 87.

HENRY the SECOND;

OR, THE,

FALL OF ROSAMOND.

[Price One Shilling and Six-Pence.]



HENRY the SECOND;

OR, THE

FALL of ROSAMOND:

A

T R A G E D Y;

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

Written by THOMAS HULL. *K.*

Poor artless Maid, to stain thy spotless Name,
Expence, and Art, and Toil united strove,
To lure a Breast that felt the purest Flame,
Sustain'd by Virtue, but betray'd by Love.

SHENSTONE'S ELIGES,



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, Strand.
M.DCC.LXXIV.

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LONDON:

P R E F A C E.

I Hold it an indispensible Duty to mention some Circumstances, which gave Birth to the following Scenes, wherein I shall not only indulge my Pride, but, perhaps, in some Degree, palliate the Boldness, and (as it may be thought by many) Presumption of my Understanding.

The Fable and Conduct of this Tragedy were projected as long ago as the Year 1761, by *the late* Mr. *Shenstone*, at his sweet Retirement, the *Leasowes*, in *Warwickshire*. Herein consists my Pride, that I enjoyed a happy (but too short) Intimacy with that amiable and accomplished Man.

In the Summer of that same Year,* Mr. *Shenstone* had been present at the Performance of a hasty Alteration of Mr. *Hawkins's* Tragedy of *Henry and Rosamond*, which I produced at the Theatre at *Birmingham*, for the temporary Use of a particular Friend. Undigested and imperfect as it was, that excellent Judge said, there was a Pathos in the Story, which, notwithstanding the Defects of the Drama,

* See Mr. *Shenstone's* Letter, No. 105, to Mr. *Graves*, Sept. 14, 1761.

made the Representation very pleasing; and he signified his Wonder that such an affecting and *popular Tale* should not have found its Way to the Stage. Hence arose many Conversations on the Subject, all which terminated in his advising me *to make the Story my own*. The known Kindness of his Heart, perhaps, gave me Credit for greater Abilities, than I really possessed. He continued to encourage me with a Warmth which flatters me in the Recollection; and, after I had left *Warwickshire*, obliged me with several Letters to the same Purpose, which I still preserve as *valuable Relicks*.

In one of those Letters he suggested the Character of the *Abbot*; in Order, as he said, to add a little more Business to a Story, which otherwise might be too barren to furnish Matter for five Acts. It may easily be supposed I forthwith adopted his Idea, and carefully treasured in my Mind every Sentiment he let fall on this, as well as other Subjects; and I can say, with great Truth, that among the many Conversations I enjoyed with that excellent Man, I never knew one from which I did not derive considerable Instruction, as well as Delight.

The unexpected Loss of this most estimable Friend * (which will ever be lamented by all who knew him) dispirited me from the Undertaking,

* He died Feb. 11, 1763.

and I laid aside my Plan, together with all his Letters, till the Beginning of last Year. The Scheme itself, it is true, had often, in the Interval, occurred to my Remembrance, but a Doubt of my Ability to execute it, even in a *passable* Manner, deterred me from the Attempt.

Mrs. *Hartley's* Arrival at *Covent-Garden* Theatre, and the warm Solicitations of a Friend, induced me once more to resume the Design. The happy *Suitability* (if I may be allowed the Phrase) of her Figure, to the Description of *Rosamond* (as may be found in Dr. *Percy's* amusing and instructive Collection of old Ballads, Vol. ii. Page 137) viz.

Her crisped Lockes, like Threads of Golde,
Appear'd to each Man's Sight;
Her sparkling Eyes, &c. &c.

assisted by the Softness and Gentleness of her Demeanour, encouraged me, at length, to make the Attempt; and the ununiversal Aprobation given by the Public to her Appearance, Manner and Performance, on the first Representation of this Play, happily convinced me I was not singular in my Opinion.

In the general Execution of the Piece I have paid a particular Attention to the *old Ballad*, and endeavoured at a Simplicity of Style, both which Mr. *Sbenstone* earnestly recommended. I am not conscious of any further Helps, except having

adopted the Idea (not the Matter) of an Interview between the *King* and *Clifford* in the Monastery, from Mr. *Hawkins*.

I had originally made *Clifford* die of a broken Heart, under the Sanction of the Death of *King Lear*, as originally drawn by that great Master of human Nature, *Shakespeare*; but the general Opinion of the Public, and the Persuasions of my Friends, induced me to vary my Design in the Representation.

I have little further to add, but my Intreaties that the Reader will be pleased to judge with Lenity, what was undertaken with Diffidence.

Advised, assisted, and encouraged as I was originally, to this Undertaking, by the Possessor of such eminent Abilities, and such Benignity of Disposition, I seek no *living* Patron, but pride myself in having this Opportunity to dedicate my humble Production,

With the warmest Affection

and Gratitude,

TO

TO THE
M E M O R Y
OF
WILLIAM SHENSTONE,
ESQ.

Westminster, January 19, 1774.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author, would justly incur the Charge of Ingratitude were he not to return his warmest Acknowledgments to ~~the~~ *Public* for their very indulgent Reception of this Play; to Mr. *Colman* for his spirited and deservedly admired Epilogue; and to the *Performers* for their Zeal and Affluity in the Study and Support of their respective Characters.

P R O.

PROLOGUE,

Written and Spoken by the AUTHOR.

*L*ONG Time oppress'd with painful Doubts and Fears,
At length the dread decisive Hour appears,
The awful Trial comes! and here I stand,
To abide the Verdict of my native Land.
Will not the Judge himself for Favour plead,
When the poor trembling Culprit owns the Dead;
When in false Arts he scorns to seek Support,
But throws him on the Mercy of the Court?

Such is my State, whom wild Ambition draws
To stand the Judgment of dramatic Laws;
Bold the Attempt, (and, much I fear, in vain),
That I, the humblest in the Muses' Train,
Should dare produce, in this nice-judging Age,
My own weak Efforts on the dang'rous Stage!

Had I the slightest Touch of plaintive Rowe,
Whose Numbers oft have bade your Sorrows flow,
Your Plaudit undismay'd I might implore,
And Rosamond might plead, like hapless Shore:

But as it is, your Kindness be my Friend,
For that alone I sue—to that I bend.
If by an artless Tale, in artless Strain,
A mild and patient Hearing I obtain,
And my poor Labours o'er, behold ye part
With unpain'd Ear and undisgusted Heart,
'Twere Triumph and Delight! but if the Lays,
Deserve your Censure, which aspir'd to Praise,
Ev'n to your Kindness will I not presume,
Nor strive to deprecate my proper Doom;
This sole Indulgence let my Fault procure,
Mildly inflict, submissive I endure.

CHARACTERS.

HENRY II. King of England,	Mr. SMITH.
HENRY Prince of Wales,	Mr. WROUGHTON.
CLIFFORD,	Mr. HULL.
ABBOT,	Mr. CLARKE.
SALISBURY,	Mr. GARDNER.
VERULAM,	Mr. R. SMITH.
LEICESTER,	Mr. THOMPSON.
QUEEN ELEANOR,	Miss MILLER,
ROSAMOND,	Mrs. HARTLEY.
ETHELINDA,	Miss PEARCE.

SCENE,

Oxford, and Places adjacent.

HENRY the SECOND;

OR, THE

FALL of ROSAMOND.

ACT I.

SCENE, *an Apartment in Salisbury's House.*

Enter CLIFFORD and SALISBURY.

CLIFFORD:

SALISBURY, no more; seek not with empty Words
To talk down Grief like mine; hadst thou a Child,
Whom thy fond Heart had dwell'd and doated on,
As mine on *Rosamond*, and felt'st the Pang
Of seeing her devote her matchless Beauty
To lawless Love, her Dignity and Virtue
To Infamy, and Shame, thou woud'st not brook
Vain Consolation.

B

SALIS-

SALISBURY.

Judge not I esteem
 Thy Suff'rings light, or think thy Pains will yield
 To cold Philosophy.

CLIFFORD.

No—Wou'dst thou ease
 The tortur'd Wretch, thou must sit down beside him,
 Shed Tear for Tear, in sympathizing Silence;
 List to the Tale which Sorrow loves to tell,
 And, by partaking the distressful Cause,
 Sooth the strong Woe that will not be controul'd.

SALISBURY.

Give thy full Bosom Vent, thy Friend shall wait
 With patient and participating Heart.

CLIFFORD.

I ask but that; for shou'dst thou weary Language,
 Ranfack the Stores of subtle Sophistry,
 For deepest Arguments—my simple Answer
 Confutes and baffles all—I've lost my Child.

SALISBURY.

I grant it, Lord, and meant alone to stand
 A friendly Mediator 'twixt thyself
 And the o'er-ruling Tumults of thy Mind.
 I dread their Violence. Did'st thou not talk
 Of Vengeance and Redress? Whence shou'd they spring?
 Where wou'dst thou point them? Say, is this a Time
 To add to *Henry's* Troubles? now, when dark
 Intestine Feuds and foreign Foes combine
 To shake his Throne and Peace?

CLIF-

CLIFFORD.

Cousin, thou call'st
 A Blush to these old Cheeks, at the bare Thought
 Of what thy Words imply. Think'st thou I mean,
 Had this weak Arm the highest Power of Vengeance,
 To stain my native Land with civil Slaughter?
 No, Heaven forefend! nor should a Danger reach
 My Sovereign's sacred Life. Were there a Wretch
 Accurs'd enough to raise his trait'rous Arm
 'Gainst Henry's Breast, *Clifford* would rush between,
 Oppose himself to the Assassin's Point,
 And glory in the Death that fav'd his King.

SALISBURY.

My Mind's at Peace.

CLIFFORD.

So rest it, noble *Salisbury*!
 Shall I be plain, and tell thee all my Weakness?
 'Spite of ungrateful Henry's Perfidy,
 'Spite of the Sorrows that assail my Heart,
 I love him still, I love this royal Robber.
 In early Youth I led him to the Field,
 Train'd his advent'rous Spirit, shar'd his Dangers,
 And by his Side maintain'd my Country's Honour,
 In many a gallant Feat; Oh, hard Return!
 How hath he paid this Love!

SALISBURY.

When headlong Passions
 Mislend him not from his instinctive Greatness,
 How nobly shews he! Wisdom, Learning, Policy,
 Inform his Mind, and gen'rous Honour sways it.

HENRY THE SECOND; 20

CLIFFORD.

Where was it fled, that Guardian of Man's Heart
When, with insidious Arts, in evil Hour,
He lur'd my chaste, my duteous *Rosamond*
From Virtue and Obedience? Was she not
All that a Parent's fondest Wish could form?
In vain her modest Grace and Diffidence
Bore the dear Semblance of her Mother's Sweetness,
And promis'd an unfullied Length of Days.
She's lost, and the bright Glories of our Line
Are stain'd in her Disgrace.

SALISBURY.

Thy pious Heart,
Alive to all the Dangers and Mishaps
That wait on tempting Beauty, doth not need
My interposing Voice to wake soft Pity
For the lost *Rosamond*. The Love of Goodness
Not wholly leaves the Breast that Error stains,
But oft abides, a wholesome Monitor,
To call the miserable Culprit back
To its forsaken Laws. So may it fare
With her. 'Tis true the King, when in her Sight,
Engrosses all her Thoughts; but in her secret
And solitary Hours, sad she regrets
Her ruin'd Innocence, and mourns that Love
Which led her to destroy a Father's Peace,
And stain the Honours of a spotless Line.

CLIFFORD.

To save her from a deeper Plunge in Guilt
Is all my present Purpose; 'gainst the King,
No other Weapons do I mean to use,
But those which best become the manly Heart,
Reason and Conscience; let him give her back,
Stain'd

Stain'd and dishonour'd as the Mourner is,
Let him restore her to these aged Arms,
I ask no more.

SALISBURY.

Unfold thy utmost Wish,
And if a Friend's Assistance may avail,
Command thy Kinsman's warmest Services.

CLIFFORD.

Conceal my being here; let not the King
Know Clifford treads these Bounds; he must be won
To my Discourse, unconscious who I am.
I have devis'd a Means—enquire not now,
But patient aid me, and await the Issue.
I have good Hopes that all the gen'rous Fires,
Which warm'd his noble Heart, are not extinct;
If so, I may once more embrace my Child,
My still dear *Rosamond*—Blame not my Weakness,
I cannot lose the Father in the Judge,
I seek not to inflict but banish Pain,
T' awaken in her Breast a just Remorse
For her past Failings; and entice her Steps
To some serene Abode, where Penitence
And Contemplation dwell, and jointly teach
The contrite Sinner's Mind, with glowing Hopes
Of Heaven's Indulgence, and its promis'd Grace.

[Exit.]

SCENE

SCENE II.

A retir'd Grove belonging to the Palace.

Enter Prince of WALES and LEICESTER.

PRINCE.

My Spirit will not brook it! What avails
The empty Name and Title of a King,
Without imperial Pow'r! why with his Son
Divide his Throne, unless he meant to grant
A Share of that supreme Authority,
Which only lends Stability to Greatness
And gives its highest Lustre—to be caught
With the gay tinsell'd Garb of Royalty,
Befits an Ideot only; let him know
That *Henry's* Son inherits *Henry's* Pride,
And may in Time, with daring Hand, assume
What now he is debarr'd.

LEICESTER.

Your Wrongs are great;
But be not too precipitate and rash,
Lest you therein defeat the Means by which
You wish to gain. Beware, the watchful Eye
Of Curiosity besets our Paths;
Speak not so loud.

PRINCE.

What Danger? Shou'd the King
Himself o'er-hear, confront me Face to Face,
I would not shrink; mine Eye should not abate
Its angry Fire, nor my sunk Heart recall
The smallest Drop of that indignant Blood
That paints my glowing Cheek; but I wou'd speak,
Avow,

Avow, proclaim, and boast my settled Purpose:
 I have a double Cause to urge me on,
 A royal Mother's Wrongs join'd to my own.
 Do I not see her injur'd, scorn'd, abandon'd,
 For the loose Pleasures of a Wanton's Bed,
 His beauteous Minion, whom embower'd he keeps
 In *Woodstock's* mazy Walks? Shall he do this
 Un-notic'd, un-reproach'd, yet dare to check
 My honest Ardour? He hath yet to learn,
 That Parent who expects his Son to walk
 Within the decent Pale of rigid Duty,
 Should keep a heedful Watch o'er his own Steps,
 And by his Practice well enforce the Doctrine
 He means to have him learn.

LEICESTER.

Yet check this Passion,
 And hear the Dictates of my cooler Mind.
 Is not the Council here conven'd this Morn,
 By *Henry's* Order, to debate the Courtesy
 Of the French Monarch, who even now invites
 Thy royal Presence to his gallant Court,
 On friendly Visit?

PRINCE.

Yes—and here the Partner
 In *England's* Throne waits, till their mighty Wisdoms
 Shall have determin'd what his Course must be,
 And deign to call him in; waits like a servile
 And needy Pensioner, that asks a Boon.

LEICESTER.

Again you lapse into this wild Extreme.
 Forget a while Ambition and Revenge,
 And court cool Wisdom; act the Politician;
 Play to their Humours, yield to their Decrees;
 Use this French Journey, as the happy Step
 To mount to your Desires.—Tho' here depriv'd

Of

8 HENRY THE SECOND,

Of Pow'r, in *Normandy* your Half-King Tide
Enables you to scatter Favours round,
Such as shall gain you popular Applause
And win your Subjects' Hearts—This Point obtain'd,
All you can ask is yours; you may command
Where now you sue, and *Henry's* Self may fear
Your Potency, and grant your highest Wish.

PRINCE.

By Heav'n thou hast inflam'd my eager Soul
With bright Imaginations of Renown,
Of Conquest and Ambition; I a while
Will try to sooth this proudly swelling Heart,
Into mild Heavings, and submissive Calms,
For this great Purpose.

LEICESTER.

To your Aims devoted,
I'll privily away, and meet you there;
Will worm myself into each Norman Breast;
Pour in their greedy Ears your early Virtues,
Your Love of them, their Interest and Honour;
Then join in any hardy Enterprize
That Fore-thought can suggest, and win the Palm,
Or die beside thee.

PRINCE.

Gen'rous, gallant Friend!
I have not Words to thank thee—to my Breast
Let me receive the Guardian of my Glory,
In full Assurance that his noble Friendship
Shall never be forgot.

LEICESTER.

Behold, the Queen;
She moves this Way.

PRINCE.

OR, THE FALL OF ROSAMOND. 9

PRINCE.

I will retire a while;
I would not meet her, till this hop'd Departure
Be fix'd irrevocably, lest her fond
Maternal Love and Softness might prevail
O'er that instinctive Yielding in the Breast,
Which Nature wakens when a Mother sues,
And win some Promise from my pliant Heart,
That I should scorn to break. [Exit.]

LEICESTER.

What if I try
To win her to our Cause? The frequent Wrongs
Which fire her haughty Mind, join'd to Affection
For her young Henry, may engage her Help
In any Scheme that promises Revenge.
But soft—the present is no Time for that;
For with her comes that busy meddling Abbot,
That Dealer in dark Wiles, who rules and guides
The Consciences of all who weakly crouch
To his Mock-Sanctity. I will avoid him—
Even now some Mischief broods within his Mind!
Perhaps tow'rd me; for he, of late, hath shewn me
Marks of Respect and Courtesy, wherein
He was not wont to deal. Time only will
Explain the Object of his present Aims,
For in his Proteus-Face, or even his Words,
No smallest Trace of what employs his Thoughts
Can ever be descry'd. [Exit.]

Enter QUEEN and ABBOT.

QUEEN.

Tell me no more
Of long-protracted Schemes and tedious Wiles;
My Soul is all Impatience: Talk to me
Of Vengeance, speedy Vengeance.

C

ABBOT.

10 HENRY THE SECOND;

ABBOT.

What can be
Devis'd to punish, pain, and mortify,
Beyond what is enjoin'd on *Henry's* Head?
Tho' distant from the venerable Shrine,
Where martyr'd *Becket's* sacred Blood was spill'd,
Is he exempt from Penance? Doth not here
Our careful Mother-Church pursue her Foe?
Is he not nightly doom'd to tread the lone
And solemn Isles of *Ida's* holy House,
In deep Attonement for the barb'rous Fall
Of that dear murder'd Saint?

QUEEN.

And what atones
For *Eleanor's* loud Wrongs, her murder'd Peace?
Will all the Penances e'er yet devis'd
By dronish Priests, relieve my tortur'd Heart?
Will they recall my *Henry's* truant Love,
Or blast the Charms of that deluding Witch,
Who lures him from me? This is the Redress
Which *Eleanor* demands—this the Revenge
Alone, which she can condescend to take.

ABBOT.

Nor is this past my Hope to purchase for you:
My Thoughts, devote to you and your Repose,
Continually labour for your Good.
Alas! you know not, mighty Queen, the Sighs
My Heart has heav'd, the Tears mine Eyes have shed,
For your injurious Treatment; and, even now,
Would you but bid your just Resentment cool,
I think the wish'd Occasion is at Hand,
That gratifies your most enlarg'd Desire.

QUEEN.

OR, THE FALL OF ROSAMOND. 11

QUEEN.

Thy Words are Balsam to my wounded Peace.
Go on, go on ; dwell on this pleasing Strain,
And I will worship thee.

ABBOT.

Is not the Council
Conven'd by Henry ? Do they not decree
Your darling Son shall strait for France ?

QUEEN.

Ay, there

Again is *England's* Queen insulted, mock'd—
Have I no Right of Choice ? Shall the dear Boy,
Whose noble Spirit feels his Mother's Wrongs,
Shall he be banish'd from me, torn away,
My only Comforter ?

ABBOT.

He must not go.
You must prevent it—practise every Art ;
Nay, bid your Pride and fierce Resentment bend
To soft Request and humblest Supplication,
Ere suffer his Departure.

QUEEN.

Tell me, Father,
How this is to be done. Canst thou speak Peace
To the tumultuous Bosom of the Deep,
When the loud Tempest tears it ? Can I meet
With patient Meekness my Oppressor's Sight ?
Wear an apparent Calmness in my Face,
While heaving Anguish struggles in my Mind ?
It will not be.

C. ABBOT.

ABBOT.

There are no other Means,
 What tho' the Council urge State-Policy,
 And Public-Good, for their Consent herein,
 Their inward Aim is to oblige the King,
 Who labours this great Point. And what's his Drift?
 No courteous Scheme, to please his Brother *France*;
 But merely to remove the gallant Prince.

QUEEN.

Say'st thou?

ABBOT.

He fears a Rival in the Hearts
 Of discontented Subjects; the brave Youth,
 With Speech undaunted, that disdains Disguise,
 Hath freely spoke your Wrongs: Hence Jealousy
 Broods in the King, lest your aspiring Son
 May prove, in Time, a Bane to his Pursuits,
 In wanton Dalliance, and illicit Love.

QUEEN.

Is this the End of all his boasted Care
 For my Son's Weal, his Happiness and Honour?
 This the great Cause his Brother *France* must see
 Th' all-praised Heir of *England's* mighty Throne?
 Oh, *Henry*! Whither is thy Greatness fled?
 Is thy bold Pride, thy Majesty of Heart,
 Sunk in low Stratagems and mean Deceits?
 So will it ever be; when Perfidy
 Pollutes the Soul; the Sense of Honour flies,
 And Fraud and Meanness fill the vacant Seat.

ABBOT.

Lose not the precious Hours in useless Reasonings;
 Speed to the Presence; seize the first fair Moment:
 Hang on his Garment, clasp his stubborn Knees;

Foil

OR, THE FALL OF ROSAMOND. 13

Fall Art with Art, and practise every Means
To win the King from this abhorr'd Design.

QUEEN.

I go; howe'er ill-suited to the Task,
I will essay it.—Stoop, exalted Heart,
A Moment stoop; and, Tongue, learn thou a new,
An unbeseeming Lesson; let the Cause,
The noble Motive, consecrate the Means.
Remember, *Eleanor*, thou fall'st a while,
To rise more glorious; to record thy Name
Amid the fairest Legends of Renown,
A brave Avenger of thy Sex's Wrongs, [Exit,

ABBOT.

Go, shallow Woman! thy impatient Soul,
That mounts to Frenzy at each slight Surmise
Of Injury, makes thee a precious Tool
For deep-laid Policy to work withal.
The Prince must here abide——his tow'ring Pride,
And *Leicester's* hot and enterprising Genius,
Assisted by my subtle Aid, may raise
A Storm that shall destroy this haughty King,
This Poison to our Cause and holy Order.
Henry, thou know'st not what a Foe thou hast
In this un-mitigable Breast——my Soul
Abhors thee, and will never know Repose,
Till thou hast fall'n a Victim to my Rage.
The greatest, noblest Cause inspires my Deeds!
Look down, Oh, fainted *Becket*! with Delight,
On thy true Servant! Let thy blessed Spirit
Assist my Purpose, while I seek Revenge
On him who dar'd insult our Holy Faith,
By instigating sacrilegious Hands
With thy dear Blood to stain our hallow'd Shrines.

[Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

141 HENRY THE SECOND;

A C T II.

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Palace.*

Enter the KING and VERULAM.

KING.

TRUE, *Verulam*, and it must be thy Care
To check this growing Pride, which mounts so fast,
And like the forward Sapling boldly strives
To emulate the lofty Cedar's Height,
Which long hath tower'd in unrivall'd Strength,
The Glory of the Wood.

VERULAM.

That Zeal and Love,
Which hitherto hath won my Master's Confidence,
Long as the Life-blood warms this aged Heart,
Shall be employ'd to serve him: but this asks
The nicest Caution; soft Advice must sooth
His head-strong Spirit, that, on the least Surmise
Of an usurp'd Authority, would start
Aside, indignant of Controul.

KING.

To thee,
Thy Love and Prudence, we confide the Whole.
Thy polish'd Sense, thy Knowledge of Mankind,
And long Experience, render thee most fit
For this great Task.

VERULAM.

The Time of his Departure,
Is it yet fix'd?

KING.

KING.

On our Decree alone
That Point depends; he shall with Speed away;
These rude Commotions, that assail us round,
May call us from our Realm; should it prove so,
He must not here remain; his Stay were fatal.

VERULAM.

Not so, I hope, my Liege.

KING.

Prudence enjoins
Our strictest Caution. What his own Ambition
Might of itself attempt, we cannot say,
But there's a farther Danger to be fear'd.

VERULAM.

His Virtues will defend him from such Deeds,
As Honour and Obedience must alike
Condemn; and he has Virtues which, I trust,
Will cast a Lustre o'er his rising Years,
When the slight Indiscretions of his Youth
Are buried in Oblivion.

KING.

I trust so, too;
Yet, *Verulam*, where splendid Virtues grow
Great Errors also shoot; his Time of Life
Is now in that capricious, wavering State,
When the soft Bosom is susceptible
Of ev'ry new Impression; his Colleague,
(From whom we wish him sunder'd) subtle *Leicester*,
Is ever at his Ear, watchful to seize
Th' unguarded Moment of the youthful Heart,
When dark Insinuations may prevail
Upon his ductile Mind. Be thou in Readiness,
On our first Notice.

VERU.

VERULAM.

This important Point,
Which waited only, what this Morn hath given,
The Council's Sanction, hath been long debated,
I am prepar'd, my Leige.

KING.

Behold our Son!

Enter the PRINCE.

Henry, the Council, zealous for thy Welfare,
The ripe Improvement of thy growing Virtues,
And the successive Glories of our Line,
Have by their Voices sanctified our Will,
In thy Departure hence. Go, reap that Profit
Which the discerning and ingenious Mind
Gains from new Climes, that Knowledge of the World,
Of Laws, of Customs, Policy, and States,
Which Observation yields alone, and Books
And learned Guides imperfectly convey.

PRINCE.

I thank my Father's Love; the Council wisely
Bend to thy Will; they but allot what else
Had been demanded by the future Heir,
And present Partner in th' imperial Seat.
My glowing Youth and kindling Spirit scorn
To live coop'd up within one scanty Bound:
Would Life permit, it were Delight to trace
Each scepter'd Region of the peopled World,
To mark, compare, define their various Modes,
And glean the Wisdom that results from all.

KING.

Blest in th' Inheritance of *England's* Throne,
This Ardour well befits thee. Go, my Henry,
Visit our Brother *France*; there shine a Star
Of this rich Diadem; let the bright Dawn

Of

Of thy young Virtues glitter in their Eyes;
Those Virtues which shall grace this glorious Isle,
When we are low in Dust.

PRINCE.

And shew a Heart
Prepar'd to vindicate each royal Due,
With the last Drop that warms its swelling Veins.

KING.

Spoke with a free-born Spirit—Yet beware,
Be not impetuous to grasp at Power,
Nor use it, when obtain'd, beyond the Limits
Of Reason and Uprightness; in the Monarch
Do not forget the Man. This honest Lord,
An able Counsellor and steady Friend,
We make Companion of thy Expedition;
Receive him, *Henry*, from thy Father's Hand,
Worthy thy Friendship, wear him near thy Heart;
And should some hasty Warmth mislead thy Youth,
Be his white Hairs the rev'rend Monitors,
To warn thee back to the neglected Path,
From which thy Steps had stray'd.

PRINCE.

I love his Virtues,
And thus receive the Man my Sire esteems.

Enter the QUEEN.

QUEEN.

Must I then lose him? Is he not my Son?
Or has a Mother's Tongue no Right to plead
In her own Sufferings? Oh, my Lord, my *Henry*,
Stand thou between thy Wife, and the hard Sentence
Of Men, who feel not the soft Ties of Nature,
And give me back my Boy.

D

KING.

18 HENRY THE SECOND,

KING.

Madam, forbear!
Parental Feelings in my Bosom fway,
Strong as in thine. Is he not lost alike
To *Henry* as to *Eleanor*? Subdue
This unbecoming Weakness, that prefers
Self-Satisfaction to the public Weal.
He must away.

QUEEN.

Alas! there was a Time
When *Henry's* Speech had falter'd o'er and o'er,
Ere he had utter'd, with determin'd Breath,
So harsh a Sentence. Is that Time forgot?
—Nay, turn not from me, *Henry*! doth thy Heart
Shame to avow the Guests it harbour'd once,
Fond Love and gentle Pity?

PRINCE.

Cease, my Mother,
Oh, cease to interrupt my Course of Glory;
I go but for a Season, to return
More worthy thy Endearments.

QUEEN.

Art thou, too,
A Traitor to my Peace? And dost thou wish
To fly a Mother's Arms? To leave her here,
Helpless and unprotected! Oh, my Son!
Oppose not thou, my Wish, but rather join
To melt a Father's Heart.

KING.

'Twere useless, Madam;
Think who thy Husband is, and what his Ties.
How light, how wavering must he appear
In public Eyes, should he abjure the Point
He hath just labour'd! Recollect thyself—

Thou

Thou canst not wish him so to slight the Claims
Of Wisdom, and of Honour.

QUEEN.

Nor the Claims,
The soft'ning Duties of domestic Life;
The Claims of Happiness, of inward Peace,
Which long my Heart hath sigh'd for.

KING.

Eleanor,
Once more, remember who we are; a King
That will not brook to be arraign'd and school'd
For petty Indiscretions. *Henry* judges
His own Mis-doings, and the Chastisement
Must be inflicted by his conscious Mind,
Not the bold Railings of another's Tongue.

QUEEN.

I will be mild, be patient, be advis'd;
I do recall my Words, revoke each free,
Each hasty Breath of my unguarded Speech,
Which hath offended thee; henceforth I bend
My Temper to thy Will, thy nicest Wish,
So I may keep my Son.

KING.

No more—thou askest
What cannot be.

QUEEN.

Thus lowly on my Knee
Will I turn Suppliant for him.

KING.

Oh, forbear!
That Posture ill becomes us both, I grieve
Thou shoud'st be so importunate, for what
We must not, cannot, will not grant.

D 2

QUEEN.

QUEEN.

For this

Have I debas'd myself? Hath *England's* Queen
Bent lowly to the Earth, to be denied
A Suit, the Mother had a Right to claim?
My Heart swells high, indignant of the Meanness,
And scorns itself for such Servility.

KING.

Prefer a proper Suit, thou can'st not ask
What *Henry* shall refuse.

QUEEN.

Oh no! Thy Grants,
Thy kind consenting Smiles, thy soothing Accents,
Thy Love, thy Faith, are all withdrawn from *Eleanor*,
And given to another; conscious Shame
O'er-pow'rs me, while I own they once were dear;
But I will now forget them, rase them out
From my officious Mem'ry, which hath dar'd
To call them back to my insulted Heart,

KING.

Well doth this Railing, which thy Fury promis'd,
Warn us to part; our Kindness meant to give
Some Days Indulgence to the Mother's Feelings.

QUEEN.

I scorn both that and thee.

PRINCE, [*Afide.*]

My Bosom swells,
Impatient of her Wrongs—down, down, a while,
The Time—the Time will come—

KING.

OR, THE FALL OF ROSAMOND. 21

KING,

Lord *Verulam*,
Prepare thee, on the Instant; he shall hence
Before yon Sun decline. If thou hast aught
Of Love or Duty for thy Mother's Ear,
Thou hast free License, *Henry*, to employ
The present Moments in that pious Office;
Yet take good Heed—let not a Woman's Weakness
Melt thy Resolves, and tempt thee to forget
The Debt thou ow'st thy Country and thy King.

[Exit with *Verulam*.

PRINCE.

Restrain those precious Drops, my dearest Mother,
That trembling stand in thy swoll'n Eyes, and shew
Like the full Bubbings on the Fountain's Brim,
Pressing to pass their Bounds; abate this Grief,
And bid thy Bosom rest.

QUEEN.

If thou behold'st
One Tear disgrace mine Eye, fierce Indignation,
Not Grief, hath call'd it forth—away, away—
Seem not solicitous about the Cause
That pains thee not; thou art no more a Son,
No more a Comfort to thy Mother's Woe.

PRINCE.

Oh, by the Hopes I have of future Fame,
I do not merit these ungentle Terms.
Revoke thy Words—resume those gentle Strains,
Which wont to fall upon thy *Henry's* Ear,
'And Nature's Feelings will unflue my Heart
In Blood to thy Complainings.

QUEEN.

QUEEN.

Art not thou
 Join'd with the rest, a Foe to my Repose?
 See'st thou not how thy Mother is neglected,
 Abandon'd, scorn'd? Yet thou canst yield Obedience
 To the Decrees of him who thus insults me,
 And leave me to my Wrongs.

PRINCE.

Can I oppose
 A Parent's absolute Command? Oh, Madam!
 Think on my State, how critically nice;
 'Twixt two such urgent Claims, how hard to judge!
 I must resist a King and Father's Power,
 Or seem neglectful of a Mother's Woes.
 Judge me not so; even while I own the Strength
 Of this imperial Mandate, and prepare
 To speed for *France*, I feel for your Afflictions,
 Lament your helpless State, and could, with Joy,
 Yield up my Life, to save you from Disgrace.

QUEEN.

There spoke my Son again! Oh, my dear *Henry*!
 If thy Soul's Truth confirms these precious Words,
 (And that it does, I trust that starting Tear)
 Reflect what further must betide my Life,
 What future Hoards of Misery and Shame
 Fate hath to pour upon my wretched Head.
 My Share in the imperial Seat, my Life
 Even now, perchance, is doubtful; all Ills threaten;
 And when the mighty Measure is complete,
 When every Breast, but thine, is callous tow'rd me,
 Must I call out in vain for my Defender?
 Or must I yield my Spirit to my Wrongs,
 And poorly die beneath them?

PRINCE.

OR, THE FALL OF ROSAMOND. 23

PRINCE.

Ere the Hour
Arrive, that should behold that dire Event,
I would myself redress thee, wou'd excite
My Norman Subjects in thy just Defence;
Wou'd head them, and oppose my vengeful Sword
To each oppressive Breast, (save One alone)
To vindicate thy Rights.

Enter VERULAM.

VERULAM.

The King, my Lord,
Expects you.

PRINCE.

I attend him strait. [Exit Verulam.

QUEEN.

This Haste
Hath Malice in it.

PRINCE.

Heed it not, my Mother;
This Journey (if my Guests deceive me not)
Shall be the Source of Good; and on thy Head
May all that Good descend! Be Death my Lot,
So I give Peace to thee!

QUEEN.

I will not shame
Thy noble Spirit with weak wom'nish Tears,
Or one disgraceful Sigh. Wilt thou remember
Thy Mother's Wrongs?

PRINCE.

PRINCE.

I will.

QUEEN.

Adieu, begone ; [Exit Prince.]
 Glory and Bliss be thine ! This gallant Boy
 (So my prophetic Mind forebodes) shall prove
 My great Avenger, and Oppression's Scourge.
 Perfidious *Henry* ! thou impell'st my Soul
 To these Extremes ; thou mak'st me what I am.
 Hadst thou continu'd, what I knew thee once,
 Endearing, tender, fond—but hence the Thought !
 Let me shun that, lest my great Heart recoil,
 And shrink inglorious from its mighty Task.
 Why comes he not ? This Abbot ! Oh, 'tis well.

Enter the ABBOT.

Where are thy Councils now ? Thy subtle Schemes ?
 All weak and un-availing—I am lost ;
 Sunk in my own Esteem ; have meanly bent
 Beneath injurious *Henry's* lordly Pride,
 And heard my Prayers rejected.

ABBOT.

Hapless Queen !
 Thy Wrongs, indeed, cry loud.

QUEEN.

My Son's torn from me.

ABBOT.

I've heard it all.

QUEEN.

QUEEN.

And sat inactive down,
To wait the flow Events of Time and Chance!

ABBOT.

Misdeem me not, great Queen; I have revolv'd
Each Circumstance, with nicest Scrutiny;
Ev'n from this Journey, which we wish'd to thwart,
Much Good may be deriv'd; if the Prince breathe
The Spirit of his Mother——

QUEEN.

Peace! my Policy
Hath flown before thee there; I have explor'd
His active Spirit; found him what I hop'd:
For me he sallies forth; for me returns,
To vindicate my Rights.

ABBOT.

As we cou'd wish;
And a sharp Spur, to forward his Designs
In any daring Enterprize, is *Leicester*.
By secret Emissaries I have learn'd,
Within this Hour, that warm, ambitious Friend
Withdraws from Court, and speeds to join the Prince
In *Normandy*.

QUEEN.

But what avail these Views,
Of distant Vengeance, to my present Pangs?
Here I endure the Bitterness of Woe,
While my curst Rival, bane of all my Joys,
Dwells in Tranquility and soft Content;
In placid Ease, within her Fairy-Bower,
Enjoys my *Henry's* Smiles, his fond Endearments,
And Vows of Love—Ah! due to me alone!

E

ABBOT.

ABBOT.

That Dream shall vanish quickly.

QUEEN.

Say't thou, Father?

ABBOT.

This very Evening, my religious Function
Demands me at the Fair-one's Bower.

QUEEN.

The Fiend's—

ABBOT.

To thy sole Use the Time shall be employ'd,
I will awaken in her tim'rous Mind
The Dangers of her State; load her with Scruples;
Then work her Temper to some dang'rous Scheme,
That shall undo her Favour with the King.

QUEEN.

Its Nature?—Speak—

ABBOT.

Tax me not, gracious Mistrefs,
To farther Explanation—Let me have
The Triumph and Delight to pour at once
My subtle Scheme, and its desir'd Success,
In thy enraptur'd Ear.

QUEEN.

Enough—go on,
And give me this great Comfort; let me hear
The Sorcerers is fundered from his Arms;
Work me this Miracle—Renown, and Wealth,
Unbounded Power, and royal Patronage
Shall be thy great Reward.

[Exit.

ABBOT.

A B B O T.

For Wealth and Power
 I on myself alone depend—Vain Dreamer!
 Who weakly canst suppose I toil for thee.
 No, I have further, higher Views, beyond
 Thy feeble Stretch;—the supple *Rosamond*
 Shall prove a greater Bane to thy Repose,
 Than thou divin'st; her will I instigate,
 With her soft Blandishments and witching Phrase,
 To practise on her Lover, till she lure him
 To cast thee from thy regal Dignities,
 Divorce thee from his Bed and Throne; that done,
 Th' Enchantress rises to the vacant Seat;
 Thus one great Point of my Desire is gain'd;
 Power uncontrollable awaits my Nod:
 The Gewgaw, dazzl'd with her Pomp, shall
 Rule the King, and I rule all, by ruling her. [Exit.

SCENE changes to a Cloister.

Enter CLIFFORD, dressed as an Abbot,

CLIFFORD.

Thou Garb, for holy Purposes design'd,
 Assist my honest Artifice; conceal
 My aged Form from Recollection's Trace,
 And be my Passport to my mourning Child,
 I'll hallow thee with Gratitude and Tears.
 This is the awful Hour, if right I learn,
 When in these solemn Isles the royal *Henry*
 Treads, Pilgrim-like, these Flints, and pours his Soul
 In Sighs for murder'd *Becket*—where, alas!
 Where are the deep Laments, the bitter Tears,
 Which he should shed for *Clifford's* ruin'd Peace?
 He comes, the great Disturber of my Breast:
 Ev'n noble in his Guilt!—my Heart avows

E 2 The

28 HENRY THE SECOND;

The fond Affection that I bore his Youth,
And melts within me.—Let me shun his Sight
A Moment, to retrieve my sinking Spirit. [*Retires.*]

Enter the KING, as a Pilgrim.

KING.

Must it be ever thus? still doom'd to tread
This sullen Course, and for a bitter Foe?
Becket, tho' in his Grave, torments me still.
And what avails it him, who sleeps unconscious
Of my forc'd Penance? Heart, resume thy Strength!
Rouse thee! resist the bigot Imposition,
And be thyself again.

CLIFFORD.

Who thus vents forth [*Advancing,*
His sore Disquiets?

KING.

What is he who asks?
If yon expiring Lamp deceive me not,
Thy Garb betokens a religious Function.

CLIFFORD.

Thou judgest well.

KING.

Inform me, holy Guide,
What boot the Punishments your Laws enjoin?
Self-Castigation, balmy Sleep renounc'd,
And lonely Wand'rings o'er the rugged Flint,
Thro' the long-cloister'd Hle?

CLIFFORD.

Much, pious Stranger,
Much they avail: within these silent Walls
Chaste Contemplation dwells; this hallow'd Gloom
Inspires religious Musings, ardent Prayer,

Which

Which, by their fervid Impulse, waft the Soul
Of erring Man, above this Vale of Weakness,
And teach him to regain, by heavenly Aid,
What he had forfeited by human Frailty.

KING.

Divinely spoke! But well may'st thou declaim
On their Utility, who ne'er hast felt
Their harsh Severities—Thou haply canst
Produce the Legend of a Life unstain'd.

CLIFFORD.

No—would to Heaven I had that Boast; but rank'd
'Mongst Error's Sons, I share the general Lot.
Too numerous are my Faults; but one, alas!
Beyond the rest I mourn—Spare me a Moment,
While I give Respite to my swelling Grief.

KING.

Methinks thou hast involv'd me in a Share
Of thy Distress. For what art thou enjoin'd
This rigid Duty, similar to mine?
Who hath inflicted it?

CLIFFORD.

Myself—my Conscience.

KING.

Thyself!

CLIFFORD.

The Mind that feels its own Demerits,
Needs no Infliction from another's Tongue.

KING.

My Ears, my Soul, are open to thy Words—
Give me to know thy Crime,

CLIF.

CLIFFORD.

How can I utter it,
And not sink down with Shame?

KING.

Let Shame betide
The coward Heart that will not own its Frailties;
If there's a Grace in Man superior far
To all beside, it must be that true Pride,
That bids him speak his own Misdeeds. Proceed,

CLIFFORD.

I had a Friend—the Darling of my Soul—
He lov'd, he honour'd me—the Trade of War
He taught my Youth; in many a hardy Field
Have we together fought, asserted *England's*
And noble *Henry's* Fame; *Henry*, the greatest,
The best of Kings!—

KING.

Oh, painful Recollection! [*Aside.*]
Thou once hadst such a Friend, ungrateful *Henry*!

CLIFFORD.

A Length of Brotherhood we 'joy'd together,
Till all its Blessedness was spoil'd by me.
He had a Daughter, beauteous as the Eye
Of Fancy ere imagin'd—

KING.

Spare me, spare me—
Oh, bitter Tale! thou hadst a Daughter, *Clifford*! [*Aside.*]

CLIFFORD.

I mark'd her for my own; pour'd the false Tale
Of wily Love into her credulous Ear,
And won her artless Heart,

KING.

KING

Tumultuous Pangs [Aside.
Rush like a Torrent thro' my bursting Breast ;—
My Crime, reflected, by this Stranger's Tale,
Glares frightful on me ! Till this Hour, I knew not
My Trespafs was so great—Oh, with what weak,
What partial Eyes we view our own Misdeeds !
The Faults of others are a huge Olympus,
Our own an Emmet's Nest.

CLIFFORD.

Heart, Heart, be strong ! [Aside.
He muses deeply on it—I have hurt [To the King.
Thy soft Humanity, I fear.—Perchance
Thou hast a Daughter, who, like this my Victim,
Hath stray'd from Virtue's Path.

KING.

Away, Away—
I can endure no more—O Conscience, Conscience, [Aside.
With what a wild Variety of Torments
Thou rushest thro' my Soul !—'Tis all Distraction,
And asks some more than human Strength of Reason,
To save me from Despair. [Exit.

CLIFFORD.

Kind Heaven, I thank thee ;
His noble Nature is not quite extinguish'd,
He's wounded deep—Oh ! may he but retain
This Sense of the fore Pangs he brought on me,
Till I have rescu'd my repentant Child,
And all my Bus'ness in this Life is done. [Exit.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Bower.*

ROSAMOND *discovered writing.* ETHELINDA *attending.*

ROSAMOND.

IT is in vain—my trembling Hands deny
 Their wonted Office—my distracted Mind
 Revolves a thousand Projects to regain
 Its vanish'd Peace; yet all by Turns evade
 My feeble Efforts; like the lucid Vapours,
 Which rise successive in a Summer's Sky,
 And court our Observation, yet are lost,
 Ere Fancy can assign them Name or Shape,
 Lost in the wide Expanse. Ah me! how weak,
 How insufficient to its own Desires,
 Is the poor Breast which Honour hath deserted!

ETHELINDA.

Say, is it ought thy Servant can discharge?
 She wishes to relieve thy Woe, and shares
 Thy every Pang.

ROSAMOND.

Thy sympathizing Heart
 Hath oft consol'd me, soften'd the rude Hour
 Of bitter Recollection, and repell'd
 Encroaching Agony—My Henry gave thee
 A Servant to my Use; but thy mild Nature,
 So ill adapted to the lowly State
 Wherein thy Lot was cast, taught me to change
 That servile Title for the Name of Friend.

ETHE-

ETHELINDA.

Give me that Office now, and let me speak
Thy Meanings there.

ROSAMOND.

I know not what I mean.
In vain, alas! she strives to please herself,
Who hath offended Virtue. On that Paper
I wish'd to pour my Duty to my Father,
Implore his dear Forgiveness, beg one Blessing,
Ere yet he sleep in Peace—Oh, *Rosamond*!
Well hast thou spoke! for in the Grave alone
Can *Clifford* rest.—Peace and Repose on Earth
Thine impious Offences have deny'd him.
Ere this, perhaps, he is laid low in Dust,
And his last Hours were charg'd with Grief and Shame.

ETHELINDA.

Hope better, my fair Mistress; raise thy Thoughts
From the dark Musings of despondent Woe,
To these bright Scenes of Happiness and Joy.

ROSAMOND.

I have no Title to them; these bright Scenes
May give Delight to unpolluted Breasts,
But not to mine! The Charmer, Happiness,
Hath long deserted me; with her lov'd Mate,
Seraphic Innocence, she wing'd her Flight,
I fear, for ever.—This retir'd Abode,
Grac'd with each Ornament inventive Fancy
Can furnish, to allure th' admiring Eye,
Serves but to sting me deeper with Remorse;
Upon my Cheek imprint a stronger Glow
Of conscious Shame, reflecting on the Cause,
The wretched Cause, that brought me to their View.

ETHELINDA.

These are the Dictates of deforming Spleen,
 That to the low dejected Mind presents
 False and disgusting Objects. *Henry's Absence*
 Is the sad Source that casts this mournful Gloom
 On all around : three Days have now elaps'd
 Unmark'd by him and Love ; when he arrives,
 The Bow'r, the Groves, will wear a fairer Aspect,
 And all be dress'd in Beauty and Delight.

ROSAMOND.

'Tis true, I try to wear the Smile of Joy
 In my dear Conqueror's Sight: Nay, I do wear it ;
 My Heart acknowledges the soft Delight
 His Presence gives. Had I not lov'd too well,
 I had not been this Wretch !—My Soul doats on him !
 I live but in his Looks. Why was he not
 By Fate ordain'd some rustic Villager,
 And I the Mistress of a neighbour Cot,
 That we had met, as happy Equals do,
 And liv'd in Pleasures unallay'd by Guilt!

ETHELINDA.

Yet to engage the dear, the tender Hours,
 Which royal *Henry* spares from public Toils ;
 To call that Heart your own, which all agree
 To love and honour ; feast upon those Smiles,
 Which millions sigh for ———

ROSAMOND.

Cease, my *Ethelinda* ;
 Thou know'st not how thy Words afflict my Breast.
 Think not, tho' fall'n from Innocence, my Mind
 Is callous to the Feelings of Humanity,
 Of Truth, or Justice. I reflect full oft,
 Ev'n in my happiest Moments, there lives One

Who

Who has a Right to *Henry's* ev'ry Hour,
Each tender Vow, and each attractive Smile:
I know it, and condemn my feeble Heart,
For yielding to Desires all moral Laws
Forbid, and in-born Reason disapproves.

ETHELINDA.

You school yourself too harshly.

ROSAMOND.

Oh, not so!
I have much more to bear. I have not yet
Learn'd the great Duty Expiation claims:
To part, my *Ethelinda*.

ETHELINDA.

Part! from whom?

ROSAMOND.

From *Henry*—from the Monarch of my Heart;
My Wishes' Lord, my All of earthly Blifs!
Thou marvel'st at my Words—but it must be;
It is the sole Attonement I can make
To a fond Father's Woes, his injur'd Fame,
The tarnish'd Glories of a noble Line,
The royal *Eleanor's* insulted Rights,
And my own conscious, self-arraigning Heart.

ETHELINDA.

Oh! do not flatter that fond Heart with Hope
Of such exertive Power! Beneath the Trial,
Your Strength would fail, your Resolution droop;
You cou'd not yield him up.

ROSAMOND.

By my warm Hopes
Of mild Remission to my great Offences,

F 2

I feel

36 HENRY THE SECOND;

I feel my Bosom equal to the Task,
Hard as it is ; 'so Henry left me not
In Anger or Unkindness, but resign'd me,
With the dear Care of a protecting Friend,
To the soft Paths of Penitence and Peace,
I would embrace the Torment it entail'd,
And bless him for each Pang.

ETHELINDA.

Behold he comes !

[Exit.

Enter the KING.

KING.

My *Rosamond* ! my ever new Delight !
Receive me to thy Arms, enfold me there,
Where ever-blooming Sweets perpetual rise,
And lull my Cares to Rest,

ROSAMOND,

It was not thus
My *Henry* us'd to visit this Retreat ;
Bright Cheerfulness was wont to dance around him,
Complacent Sweetness sat upon his Brow,
And soft Content beam'd lovely from his Eye,

KING.

Well thou reprov'st me ; I will strive to chace
The gloomy Cloud, that overhangs my Spirit,
Th' Effect of public Business, public Cares.
(My Tell-Tale Looks, I fear, will speak the Pain
My Heart still suffers, from that Stranger's Converse.)

[Aside,

Oft do I mourn the Duties of my Station,
That call my Thoughts to them, and claim the Hours,
Which I would dedicate to Love and thee.

ROSA-

ROSAMOND.

I meant not to reproach thee ; 'twas my Zeal,
 For the dear Quiet of thy Mind, that spoke.
 I cannot see the slightest Shade of Grief
 Dim the bright Lustre of thy chearing Eye,
 But Apprehension pains me, lest for me
 Thy Glory be diminish'd to the World.

KING.

I seek not empty popular Acclaims ;
 Thy tender Accents falling on mine Ear,
 Like rural Warblings on the panting Breeze,
 Convey more Rapture, more supreme Delight,
 Than Io-Pæans of a shouting World.

ROSAMOND.

To see bright Satisfaction glow within
 Thy manly Cheek, behold the rising Smile,
 And hear thee speak the Gladness of thy Heart,
 Is my best Joy, my Triumph, and my Pride ;
 And yet, my Henry, ought it to be so ?
 Still should I listen to the Syren, Pleasure,
 While awful Virtue lifts her sober Voice,
 And warns my Heart of her neglected Precepts ?

KING.

Forbear, forbear these soft Complaints, and speak
 Of Rapture ; speak of my improving Ardour,
 And thy unceasing Love.

ROSAMOND.

Oh ! thou divin'st not
 How many heavy Hours, and sleepless Nights,
 Thy Rose endures ! how much my faulty State
 (Bless'd as I am in thee) arraigns my Mind ;
 Oft in the bitter Hours when thou art absent,
 My

38 HENRY THE SECOND.

My Father's Image rises to my View,
Array'd in gloomy Grief, and stern Reproof.
Nay, do not eye me with that melting Fondness;
Hast thou not often bade me cast my Cares
On thee, and told me, thou wou'dst bear them for me?
Hear then, oh, hear me! for to whom but thee
Can I unload my Heart?

K I N G.

Oh, speak not thus.
Shou'd these sad Accents stain the precious Moments,
When *Henry* flies from a tumultuous World
To tranquil Joys, to Happiness, and thee?
What busy Fiend, invidious to our Loves,
Torments thy gentle Breast?

R O S A M O N D.

Trust me, my *Henry*,
This is no sudden Gust of wayward Temper,
'Tis Reason's Impulse; oft hath my Heart endur'd
Afflictive Pangs, when my unclouded Face
Hath worn a forc'd and temporary Smile,
Because I would not hurt thy noble Mind.
Advancing Time but multiplies my Torments,
And gives them double Strength; they will have Vent.
Oh! my Protector, make one glorious Effort
Worthy thyself—remove me from thy Arms;
Yield me to Solitude's repentant Shade.

K I N G.

Renounce thee, didst thou say! my *Rosalind*!
Were those the Words of her and Love?

R O S A M O N D.

They were;
It is my Love intreats; that Love which owns
Thee for its first, its last, its only Lord.

Allow

Allow me to indulge it, undisturb'd
By the sore Miseries which now surround me,
Without the Sense of Guilt, that Fiend who waits
On all my Actions, on my every Thought.

KING.

By Heaven, I never knew Distress till now!
Thy Accents cleave my Soul; thou dost not know
What complicated Agonies and Pangs
Thy Cruelty prepares for *Henry's* Heart!
He must endure a Throe, like that which rends
The seated Earth, ere he can summon Strength
To banish thee for ever from his Arms.

ROSAMOND.

Think, Conscience; Honour, plead.

KING.

Down, busy Fiend; [Aside.
That Stranger's Tale, and *Clifford's* crying Wrongs,
Distract my tortur'd Mind—in Pity cease— [To Ros.
I cannot part with thee.

ROSAMOND.

A thousand Motives
Urge thy Compliance—will not public Claims
Soon call thee from thy Realm? When thou art gone,
Who shall protect me? Who shall then provide
A safe Asylum for thy *Rosamond*,
To guard her Weakness from assailing Fears,
And threat'ning Dangers?

KING.

What can here alarm thee?

ROSA-

ROSAMOND.

Perpetual Apprehensions rise ; perchance
 The poignant Sense, how much my Crimes deserve,
 Adds to the Phantoms ; Conscience-stung I dread
 I know not what of Ill. Remove me hence,
 My dearest Lord ; thus on my Knees I sue,
 And my last Breath shall bless thee. Give me Misery,
 But rescue me from Guilt.

KING.

What, lead thee forth
 From these once happy Walls ; yield thee, abandon'd,
 To an un pitying, unprotecting World !
 Then turn, and roam uncomfortably round
 The chang'd Abode, explore in vain the Bliss
 It once afforded ; like a restless Sprite
 That hourly haunts the desolated Spot
 Where all his Treasure lay ! Bid me tear out
 This seared Heart, and rend each vital String,
 I sooner could obey thee. [Going.

ROSAMOND.

Turn, my *Henry* ;
 Leave me not thus in Sorrow ! Canst thou part
 In Anger from me ?

KING.

Anger !—Oh ! thou sweet one !
 Witness these Pangs !—I cannot, will not lose thee—

ROSAMOND.

Confirm my Pardon then ; pitying, reflect
 'Tis the first Hour I e'er beheld thy Frown.
 Forgive me—oh, forgive me !

KING.

KING.

Spare me——spare
A Moment's Thought to my distracted Soul,
To ease the Throbs, and hush the swelling Tumults,
Which my fond Love would fain conceal from thee,
Thou exquisite Tormentor! [Exit.

ROSAMOND.

Heav'n sooth thy suff'ring Mind, restore thy Peace,
And win thy yielding Spirit to my Prayer!
For it must be—the Blow must be endur'd,
Tho' Nature tremble at it—Heav'n requires it:
I hear the sacred Voice that claims aloud
Attonement for its violated Laws.
When I am sunder'd from him, ne'er again
To feast my Eyes on his lov'd Form, or share
His Converse more, it will be then no Sin,
Nor Heav'n nor Man can be offended then,
If sometimes I devote a pensive Hour
To dwell upon his Virtues; or, at Night,
When Sleep, like a false Friend, denies his Comforts,
I bathe my solitary Couch with Tears,
And weary Heav'n for Blessings on his Head.

Enter the ABBOT.

ABBOT.

Health to the Fair, whose radiant Charms diffuse
Bright Beams around, and shame meridian Day
With rival Lustre and superior Beauty!

ROSAMOND.

Alas, good Father, my dejected Heart,
Ill-suited now to Flattery's soothing Breath,
Is wrapp'd in other Thoughts.

G

ABBOT.

42 HENRY THE SECOND;

ABBOT.

An old Man's Praise
Is of small Worth; nor shou'dst thou term it Flatt'ry,
The Approbation which the ready Tongue
Spontaneous utters at thy Beauties' Sight:
But thy sad Eyes are swoln with Tears, I trust
They flow from holy Motives.

ROSAMOND.

Thou hast oft
Preach'd, in persuasive Accents, the great Duty
Of combating Temptation; teaching Virtue
To gain Dominion o'er assailing Passions,
And with her pious Firmness guard the Breast.

ABBOT.

I have, fair Daughter.

ROSAMOND.

These thy holy Precepts,
My melancholy Heart, I hope, hath learn'd;
The self-convicted Mourner hath resolv'd
To turn from Guilt's delusive dang'rous Way,
And seek the penitential Paths of Peace.

ABBOT.

Explain thyself, my Pupil; lay thy Meanings
Clear to my View.

ROSAMOND.

I have resolv'd to leave
This Culpit-State of unchaste, lawless Love,
And, in some Solitude's protecting Shade,
Attune, by future Purity of Life,
My Errors past.

ABBOT.

ABBOT.

'Tis nobly purpos'd, Daughter;
 Worthy the Precepts I have given thy Youth,
 And the great Efforts of exalted Virtue:
 But why retire to moaping Solitude?
 The Heart is weak that finds itself unable
 In any Situation to repent
 Its past Misdeeds; it is the Principle,
 And not the Place, atones; we may be good,
 And yet abide in active, chearful Life;
 There are a thousand Pleasures and Delights
 Not inconsistent with the strictest Truth
 And Sanctity of Mind.

ROSAMOND.

It may be so,
 And such may be indulg'd by those whose Lives
 Have ne'er been branded with a flagrant Crime;
 But Wretches like myself, whom Conscience taxes,
 With violated Chastity and Justice,
 Have forfeited those Rights.

ABBOT.

I like not this—
 She dares debate—She judges for herself—
 I must restrain this Freedom—'tis Presumption. [Aside.

ROSAMOND.

Yes, all shall be renounc'd, all that conspir'd
 To make my guilty Situation wear
 The Face of Bliss; Splendor and Affluence,
 All shall be given up, and well exchang'd,
 If they obtain Remission for my Crimes.

ABBOT.

Some farther Meaning lurks beneath these Words,
 Which my foreboding Fears dislike. [Aside.

44 HENRY THE SECOND.

ROSAMOND.

My *Henry*

I have solicited to this great Purpose,
Of my new-open'd, new enkindled Mind,

ABBOT.

As I divin'd—Destruction to my Views! [*Aside.*]

ROSAMOND.

Why turn'st thou from me? Breathe thy pious Comforts
To nourish my Resolves.

ABBOT.

Think'st thou, fond Pupil,
Thy Paramour will yield to thy Request?
Oh no! his Passion is too much his Master.
Think'st thou, can he who doats upon thy Beauties,
Doats even to Folly—

ROSAMOND.

Spare me, holy Father—
Wound not my Ear with one contemptuous Word
Against his Dignity: I cannot bear it.

ABBOT.

My Recollection, zealous for thy Ease,
Recalls the casual Word. I grieve to see thee
Misled by Phantoms: but there is a Way,
A clear and certain Way to Happiness,
Which thou hast not descry'd.

ROSAMOND.

Inform me, Father,
How I may compass the religious Ends
My State demands, and my whole Soul aspires to,
Without disquieting my *Henry's* Peace,
And I will bless thee for it.

ABBOT.

ABBOT.—
Love alone
Confers true Honour on the Marriage State;
Without this Sanction of united Hearts,
The sacred Bond of Wedlock is defil'd,
And all its holy Purposes o'erthrown.

ROSAMOND.
Be plain, good Father.

ABBOT.
Happiness should crown
The Altar's Rites—and Henry sure deserves
To be supremely happy—thou alone
Canst make him so. Need I say more?

ROSAMOND.
Speak on.
Clear unambiguous Phrases best besit
My simple Sense.

ABBOT.
His Union with the Queen
Cannot be term'd a Marriage; Heav'n disdains
The prostituted Bond, where hourly Jars
Pervert the blest Intent; thy vain Retirement
What boots it *Eleanor*? who now retains
The Name alone of Queen; or what avails
The Title of a Wife? Thou art th' espous'd
Of his Affections; let the Church then shed
Her holy Sanction on your plighted Loves;
A pious Duty calls, assert thy Claim,
Let thy fond Lord divorce her from her State,
And *Rosamond* shall mount the vacant Throne.

ROSAMOND.
Thy specious Arguments delude me not;
My Soul revolts against them. Hence, I scorn
Thy

Thy further Speech—Have I not Crimes enough?
 Have I not amply injur'd *Henry's* Wife,
 But I must further swell the guilty Sum?
 Fly with thy wicked, thy pernicious Schemes,
 To Breasts whence every Trace of Good is banish'd,
 I am not yet so vile; 'twas *Henry's* Self
 I lov'd, not *England's* King; not for the Wealth
 Of Worlds, for all that Grandeur can afford,
 The Pride of Dignity, the Pomp of Power,
 Nor even to fix my *Henry* mine alone,
 Will I advance one added Step in Sin,
 Or plant another Torment in her Breast,
 Whom too severely I have wrong'd already. [Exit.]

ABBOT.

Bane to this coward Heart, that shrunk beneath
 The peevish Outrage of a frantic Girl!
 The vain Presumer sorely shall repent
 Her bold licentious Pride, that dar'd oppose
 Her upstart Insolence 'gainst my Controul,
 Whose Bidding shou'd direct her ev'ry Thought.
 Had she obey'd, the doting King perchance
 Had rais'd the painted Moppet to his Throne,
 And by that Deed, had lost his People's Love;
 A ready Victim to the daring Bands,
 That threaten him around. That Hope is lost—
 New Schemes must be devis'd—all Arts employ'd;
 For nothing shall appease my fierce Repentment,
 Till the foul Wounds giv'n to our mitred Saint,
 Be deep aveng'd in *Henry's* impious Heart. [Exit.]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE *the Palace.*

The ABBOT alone.

ABBOT.

IT shall be so—the Queen herself shall be
 My Instrument of Vengeance, both on *Henry*,
 And that audacious Minion, who presum'd
 To disobey my Dictates. This new Project
 Cannot deceive my Hopes: The haughty *Eleanor*,
 Fir'd by those Demons, Jealousy and Anger,
 Will set no Bounds to her outrageous Will,
 And she hath suffer'd Wrongs that might inflame
 A colder Breast. But why recoils my Heart
 At Thought of Harm to this presumptuous Wanton?
 Why feel reluctant Strugglings, as if Virtue
 Check'd and condemn'd my Purpose? 'Tis not Harm;
 'Tis Piety, 'tis Mercy.—Will she not
 Be taken from a Life of Sin and Shame,
 And plac'd where she at Leisure may repent
 Her great Offences? This is giving her
 Her Soul's Desire.—But *Eleanor*, not I,
 Shall be the Means, Night gathers round apace:
 Ascend, thick Gloom, and with thy sable Wings
 Veil *Henry's* Peace for ever from his Eyes!

Enter QUEEN.

Hail, honour'd Queen!

QUEEN.

Art thou a Comforter?
 Thine Order calls thee such; but thou approachest
 Unlike

48 HENRY THE SECOND,

Unlike the Messenger of gladsome Tidings :
Delay is in thy Step, and Disappointment
Sits on thy Brow.

ABBOT.

Oh, skilful in the Lines
Which the Mind pictures on th' obedient Visage,
To speak her inward Workings !

QUEEN.

Thy Designs
Have fail'd ?

ABBOT.

To thee I yield the Palm of Wisdom,
Effective Policy, and deep Contrivance ;
To thee resign it all.

QUEEN.

Lose not the Moments
In vain Lamentings o'er Mischances past :
One Project foil'd, another should be try'd,
And former Disappointments brace the Mind
For future Efforts, and sublimer Darings.

ABBOT.

Thy noble Spirit may perchance succeed
Where all my Arts have fail'd. I boast no Power
O'er this perverse, this self-directed Wanton ;
She seems new-fram'd—her gentle Disposition,
Which erst was passive to Instruction's Breath,
As vernal Buds to Zephyr's soothing Gale,
Is banish'd from her Breast ; imperious Tones
Exalt her Voice, and Passion warms her Cheek.

QUEEN.

Whence can it spring, this new presumptuous Change ?
Can she assume the Port of Arrogance ?

She

She, whose soft Looks and hypocritic Meekness
Have won admiring Eyes and pitying Tongues,
While I am tax'd with warm and wayward Temper,
For that I have not Meanness to conceal
A just Resentment for atrocious Wrongs,
But bid them glow within my crimson Cheek,
And flash indignant from my threat'ning Eye.

ABBOT.

The Lures of Greatness, and Ambition's Baits,
Are eagerly pursu'd by soaring Minds :
When first their Splendor is display'd before them,
Anticipating Hope exalts their Brightness,
And fires the wretched Gazer, ev'n to Frenzy.

QUEEN.

What Hope——what Greatness——what Ambition? Speak!
Explain thy Meaning, ease the gath'ring Tumult
That struggles here, and choaks me with its Fullness.

ABBOT.

I fear to speak,

QUEEN.

Why fear? Look on me well;
I am a Woman with a Hero's Heart.
Be quick——be plain——thou hast no Tale t'unfold
Can make me shudder——tho' it make me feel.

ABBOT.

Her wild Imagination hurries her
Beyond Belief, or ev'n Conception's Limit;
Safely protected by the royal Favour
Of her great Master (may I say his Love?)

QUEEN.

On with thy Speech——Dispatch!

H

ABBOT.

ABBOT.

She threatens Defiance
 To every other Power, and all Controul:
 Bids me, with haughty Phrase, no more assume
 The Right to check her Deeds; exalts herself
 Above the Peers and Worthies of the Realm;
 Nay, frantic in her fancied Excellence,
 Becomes thy Rival in imperial Rule,
 And plumes herself on future Majesty.

QUEEN.

The Traitress! but thou err'st, it cannot be:
 Thou hast mista'en her Words; her coward Heart
 Cou'd not conceive such Insolence of Speech,
 Such arrogant Presuming.

ABBOT.

In Effect
 All was express'd, tho' not in open Terms;
 Hearts so determin'd rarely speak their Meaning,
 Left just Prevention intercept their Purpose:
 But thus much, in the Fullness of her Passion,
 Fell from her Lips: Let her a while enjoy
 (These were her Words) her transitory Greatness!
 Anon the Beam may take a different Poise;
 The Mistress may become th' exalted Wife,
 The haughty Wife become th' abandon'd Mistress.

QUEEN.

Breath'd she those daring, those audacious Accents,
 And doth the Wretch survive it? Be it so!
 She only lives to gratify my Vengeance.
 Ere the vain Dreamer mount her airy Throne,
 She shall be taught the Power of Royalty
 O'er her own Littleness, her Pigmy Pride.

ABBOT.

You do not mean to see her?

QUEEN.

QUEEN.

Yes—I do—

She thirsts for Honour; I will shew it her;
 Will deign to set before her shrinking View
 Majestic *Eleanor*, th' exalted Wife,
 And with a Glance destroy her.

ABBOT.

All you seek
 May be obtain'd by this great Condescension:
 Within your Power, beneath your Eye abasht'd,
 Whelm'd with her Crimes, and shrinking in her Fears,
 She'll crouch to any Terms; bind her by Oath
 No more to see your Lord; or if you doubt
 The Efficacy of that Tye, remove her
 From the gay Bower her Infamy hath stain'd.
 Perform a holy Work; force her to quit
 The wanton Course of her abandon'd Life;
 And in some dim, secure Retreat, where you
 Alone command, conceal the Sorceress
 For ever from the godlike *Henry's* Eyes.

QUEEN.

Oh, precious Doctrine! learned Comforter!
 Continue thus to counsel; leave my Heart,
 My dauntless Heart, to execute thy Schemes.

ABBOT.

When mean you—

QUEEN.

Now; this Night—my eager Fury
 Brooks no Delay—Thou must advise the Hour.

ABBOT.

About the Season when imperial *Henry*
 Speeds to his Midnight Penance at the Convent;
 I will with nicest Caution watch the Moments—

H 2

QUEEN.

QUEEN,

And be my Guide?

ABBOT,

Devoted to your Bidding.

QUEEN.

But soft—the Means of our Access—did not
 This grand Apostate to his nuptial Bond,
 Contrive some childish Toy, some subtle Clue,
 Without whose Aid Enquiry's Foot in vain
 Attempts to find the Wanton's close Retreat?

ABBOT.

He did; but that Device is only practis'd
 When public Duties call him from his Realm;
 Then is the Minion deep immur'd within
 The very Heart of the obscure Recess;
 But now that he with frequent Eye o'erlooks
 And watches his cag'd Turtle, she enjoys
 Free Range of the whole Bower, by few attended,
 And none but who submissive yield Obedience
 To our grave Habit and religious Order.

QUEEN.

Enough, use wary Watch—and hie with Speed
 To my impatient Soul. [Exit Abbot,
 Conceal her! yes,
 In that deep Cavern, that eternal Gloom,
 Where all her Shames may be conceal'd—in Death;
 Atonement less than this were insufficient
 To gratify my boundless Thirst of Vengeance.
 Long have they revell'd in the mighty Pangs
 That rent my Heart—'tis now my Turn to Triumph,
 When I behold the Traitor sunk in Grief,
 Plaining to her whose Bosom will be cold
 To his Distress, superior will I rise,
 Proudly

Proudly exult in his severest Pangs,
Point at her lifeless Corse, for whom he scorn'd me,
And loud exclaim in his afflicted Ear,
Behold the Victim of Despair and Love. [Exit

SCENE, an Apartment in the Bower.

Enter ROSAMOND with a Letter, and ETHELINDA.

ROSAMOND.

No, *Ethelinda*—Never from that Hour,
That fatal Hour when first I saw my Hero,
Saw him returning from the Field of War,
In manly Beauty, flush'd with glorious Conquest,
Till our last grievous Interview, did *Henry*
Shew Word or Look ungentle—Nay, even now,
Here in the full Distraction of his Soul,
O'er his strong Woes soft Tenderness prevails,
And all the Fondness of unbounded Love.

ETHELINDA.

But what does he resolve?

ROSAMOND.

There *Ethelinda*,
He gives me fresh Disquiet, Frenzy seems
To guide his wayward Pen; he talks of Life
As of a Load he wishes to lay down,
If I persist in my unnatural Purpose,
For such he terms it. Canst thou think, my *Henry*,
I suffer not Affliction great as thine?
Yes, let the present Tumults in my Breast
Be Witness how I struggle with Affection,
Stand up and war with Nature's strongest Power,
In Duty and Religion's righteous Cause

ETHE-

ETHELINDA.

And must your Gentleness abide such Trials,
Such hard Extremity of Wretchedness?
Is there no middle Course to steer?

ROSAMOND.

Forbear!
Seek not to tempt me from that proper Sense
Of my deep Faults, which only can sustain me
In this fore Trial; to remit my Fervour,
Were to be lost again.

ETHELINDA.

He'll ne'er Consent
To yield you up, resign you to your Woe,
Unfriended, unsustain'd, to heave alone
The bitter Sigh and pour th' unpitied Tear.

ROSAMOND.

He says he will return to me, and soon;
Then paints the Anguish of his bleeding Heart,
In unconnected Phrase and broken Periods;
Adjures me, by our Loves, no more to urge
The hard Request on which his Life depends,
Oh, did I ever think I could refuse
What *Henry* ask'd—but this—It must not be—
Lend me thy Arm, my Friend, a sudden Faintness
Comes o'er me, and instinctive Boadings whisper
I shall not long survive my *Henry's* Loss.

ETHELINDA.

Oh, chide them from you! at the sad Idea
My Sorrows stream afresh.

ROSAMOND.

Weep not for that,
'Tis my best Comfort. In the Grave alone
Can I find true Repose, that quiet Haven,

Whereto

Whereto the wretched Voyager in Life,
Whose little helpless Bark long Time hath strove
'Gainst the rude Beatings of tumultuous Guilt,
Oft casts an ardent Look, an eager Wish,
To gain a Shelter there from future Storms.

ETHELINDA.

Let me conduct thee to the cheering Breeze,
Thy Looks are pale.

ROSAMOND.

Oh thou, that art all Mercy; [Kneels.
Look down, indulgent, on the Child of Frailty;
With Pity view her Errors, and instruct her
How to obtain returning Peace and Pardon.

Enter CLIFFORD in his Disguise.

CLIFFORD.

Stay thee, fair Mourner, wherefore dost thou shun
The Messenger of Comfort?

ROSAMOND.

Ethelinda!
What Voice was that? My startled Fancy wakes
New Terrors! Yet it cannot be——

CLIFFORD.

My Daughter!—

ROSAMOND.

All gracious Heaven! 'tis he—— [Faints.

CLIFFORD.

Oh, let me clasp her
To a fond Father's aged Breast, and call
Her sinking Spirit from the Shades of Death.

ETHE-

ETHELINDA.

Oh, reverend Stranger, if thou be'st her Father,
 With gentle Voice allure her; do not cast
 The Frown of Anger on her meek Distress,
 Her Softness cannot bear it.

CLIFFORD.

Fear not, Virgin!
 Assist to raise her—the returning Blood
 Faintly renews its Course! her timid Eye
 Speaks painful Apprehension.

ROSAMOND.

Where is fled,
 That rev'rend Form? even now it hover'd o'er me,
 Sent by kind Heav'n, the sacred Delegate
 Of Comfort and Protection.

CLIFFORD.

Rosamond!

Oh! turn not from me—do not shun my Sight,
 In Pity shrink not from a Father's Eye,
 Who comes to chace thy Sorrows; comes to shed
 Some pious Drops o'er thy afflicted Heart,
 Ere he is mingled with the Dust.

ROSAMOND.

Thus lowly
 Bent to the Earth, with abject Eye, that dares not
 Look up to that much injur'd rev'rend Face,
 Let me implore thy Pardon.

CLIFFORD.

Rise, my Child,
 Oh rise and let me gaze on that lov'd Form,
 Which once was all my Comfort.

ROSAMOND.

But which now
 You look upon with Anger and Disgust.
 My Crimes deserve it all.

CLIF.

CLIFFORD.

Nay, meet my Eye—
Survey me well: Dost thou behold therein
A rigid Judge? Oh no, the Father melts
In these fast-streaming Tears.

ROSAMOND.

Has pitying Heaven
Heard the sad Prayer of such a guilty Wretch,
And granted, in the Moment of Affliction,
A Parent's Presence, and returning Blessing,
To his repentant Child!

CLIFFORD.

Dost thou repent?—
And didst thou wish once more to see thy Father?
Dry up thy Tears, and answer me with Firmness;
Dost thou repent?—Hast thou the Fortitude
To break the fatal Tye that link'd thy Soul
To lawless Love, and all its false Allurements?
Canst thou look up, with steady Resolution,
To that great Power who loves repentant Hearts,
And say thou wilt no more transgress?

ROSAMOND.

I can,
I can, my Father; that all-seeing Power,
To whom thou hast appeal'd, can witness for me,
I have renounc'd the Paths of Sin and Shame,
And mean to spend my sad Remains of Life
In deep Contrition for my past Offences.

CLIFFORD.

To find thee thus, is Rapture to my Soul!
Enter my Breast, and take again Possession
Of all the Fondness that I ever bore thee.
By my best Hopes, when in thy smiling Youth

I

Mine.

Mine Eye hath hung enamour'd on thy Charms,
Thou shew'dst not then so lovelily as now,
Dress'd in those graceful penitential Tears.

ROSAMOND.

Oh, my Father!
And may I still look up to thee with Hope
That the dear Love and Tenderness, thy Breast
Once cherish'd for thy darling *Rosamond*,
Is not extinguish'd quite?

CLIFFORD.

Alas, my Child!
I am not lost to Nature and her Ties.
We are all frail; preach Stoicks how they will,
'Tis not a Parent's Duty to cast off,
But to reclaim, the Wand'rer of his Blood.
One Question more, on that depends my Peace—
Shall I behold my Child redeem'd from Shame,
Or must I sink with Sorrow to the Grave,
Ere this great Bus'ness of my Soul's accomplish'd?

ROSAMOND.

Command my Heart; can I, thus lost to Goodness,
Assuage thy Cares, and soften the Decline
Of weary Nature? say, my dearest Father,
And by the Zeal of my Obedience, prove
The Truth of my Contrition.

CLIFFORD.

Hear me then,
Thou darling of my Bosom!—Westward hence,
On the slow Rising of a fertile Hill,
A virtuous Dame, of honourable Race,
Hath founded and endow'd a hallow'd Mansion
To pure Devotion's Purposes assign'd.
No Sound disturbs the Quiet of the Place,
Save of the bleating Flocks and lowing Herds,
And the meek Murmurs of the trilling Stream

That

That flows sweet-winding thro' the Vale beneath;
 No Objects intercept the Gazer's Eye,
 But the neat Cots of neighb'ring Villagers,
 Whose lowly Roofs afford a pleasing Scene
 Of modest Resignation and Content.
 There Piety, enamour'd of the Spot,
 Resides; there she inspires her holy Fervour,
 Mild, not austere; such Piety, as looks
 With soft Compassion upon human Frailty,
 And soothes the Pilgrim-Sinner to embrace
 Repentant Peace beneath her holy Roof.—
 Say, wilt thou quit, for such serene Delights,
 This gay Abode of Shame?

ROSAMOND.

I will, my Father;
 My Wish invites to such a soft Retreat,
 Oh, lead me forth!

CLIFFORD.

Thy Words give added Strength
 To my weak Frame, and warm my languid Blood.
 Some two Hours hence, when Midnight veils the Globe,
 Disguis'd, as now, in this religious Garb,
 Again expect me, to redeem thee hence,
 And guide thy Steps to that Abode of Bliss—
 Here break we off—

ROSAMOND.

Once more thy Blessing on me,
 While I pour forth the silent Gratitude
 Of my full Soul for thy returning Love.

CLIFFORD.

Warm as thy Soul can wish, my Child, receive it.
 Oh, the supreme Delight 'twill be, to see thee
 Restor'd to holy Peace and soft Content,
 And sometimes share thy Converse; then devote

60 HENRY THE SECOND;

My lonely Intervals to ceaseless Prayer,
That Heaven will pour on thy repentant Heart
Its healing Mercy, and its promis'd Grace! [Exit.

ROSAMOND.

Propitious Power, who chear'st the Mourner's Spirit,
Accept my boundless Thanks—thy pitying Goodness
Inspir'd my Father's Heart, and sent him hither
To succour and sustain me. Oh, continue
Thy strength'ning Fervour, that I may not shrink
From the great Task I have begun, but rise
An Object worthy thy returning Grace!

ETHELINDA.

My gentle Mistress, I partake your Transport,
Yet Apprehension checks the rising Joy.
What Agonies will pierce your *Henry's* Heart—

ROSAMOND.

Peace, on thy Life! seek not to wake again
Those Thoughts which I must hush within my Breast;
The Lover is forgot; what *Clifford's* Daughter
Leaves unperform'd, *Clifford* himself will perfect.
That Tongue, whose wholesome Counsels *Henry* wont,
In early Life, to listen and obey.
That Heart, which lov'd his Virtues, will again
Exert its Power, and win him to applaud
The Minister of Peace, who leads me hence
To that Asylum my Offences claim.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT

A C T V.

SCENE, *the Bower.*

Enter ROSAMOND and ETHELINDA.

ROSAMOND.

IS it the vain Suggestion of my Fears,
Or do unwonted Sounds, and buzzing Murmurs,
Ride in each Breeze?

ETHELINDA,

'Tis Fancy's Coinage all;
Your Mind, alarm'd lest any thwart Event
Should interrupt this Night's important Business,
Creates false Terrors.

ROSAMOND.

Twice within this Hour
Hath it presented to my tortur'd Sight
My Father in the Agonies of Death,
Gasping and pale, and stretching forth his Hands
To me for Aid and Pity.

ETHELINDA.

When Suspense
And Expectation hold Dominion o'er
The agitated Bosom, these Illusions
Are busy to torment us.

ROSAMOND.

Angels speed him
In Safety to me! and console my *Henry*,
When he shall seek his *Rosamond* in vain

Around

62 HENRY THE SECOND,

Around this once-lov'd Bower! When thou behold'st him,
(O! can it be a Crime to leave a Sigh,
One soft Adieu for him, who was so dear?)
Say, *Ethelinda*, that I left these Walls
Not with a harden'd, but a tutor'd Mind,
Not desp'rate, but resolv'd; arm'd with that due,
That holy Resolution, which becomes
My State and Purpose; and when busy Memory
Recalls the sad Idea of our Loves,
(Too oft alas! I fear 'twill press my Mind!)
I'll pour my fervent Pray'rs, that Bliss and Honour
May crown the Hero's Days!

ETHELINDA.

I will do all
My Mistress bids; but must I stay behind?
Must I renounce the sweet Companionship,
Her Gentleness and soft Humanity
Have taught me to esteem my highest Bliss?

ROSAMOND.

This once, obey—this Night's great Business done,
I claim no Duty more; but when the Storm
Shall be o'er-blown, and all be calm again,
If aught of Good befall my after-Hours,
Thou, *Ethelinda*, shall partake it with me.
Go now, collect together those dear Pledges,
The only Treasure I shall carry hence,
My *Henry's* Letters; my o'er-harrass'd Spirits
Would sink beneath the Task. [Exit Ethel.
Ill-booding Fears
Possess me still; such as I oft have heard
Haunt the sick Couch, Death's fable Harbingers.

Enter QUEEN with a Bowl and Dagger.

QUEEN.

Ay, there the Trait'ress sits. Who could surmise
Guilt kept abode in such an Angel-Form?
Approach,

Approach, thou beautiful Fiend! Well may'st thou start,
'Tis *Eleanor* that calls; she comes to wake thee
From the vain Dream, which thou hast long enjoy'd,
To Justice and Atonement.

ROSAMOND.

Shield me, Powers,
From that wrong'd Form! My Fears are all explain'd!

QUEEN.

No Pow'r can shield thee now—Thy Pray'rs are fruitless;
Now cry in vain to him who hath undone thee,
Who robb'd thee of thy Innocence of Heart,
And taught thee to be Rival to a Queen.

ROSAMOND.

Most injur'd Majesty, thus to the Earth
I bow myself before thee. I confess
My heinous Crimes; I sink beneath their Weight:
Yet Oh! take Pity on a hapless Creature
Mistaken by fatal Love, immers'd in Guilt,
And blinded to the Evils that ensued!

QUEEN.

And plead'st thou that in thy Defence, fond Wretch,
Which loudest cries against thee? Knew'st thou not
Who *Henry* was, what were his noble Ties?
How did thy Passion dare aspire so high?
Thou should'st have sought within thine own Degree
Mates for thy wanton Hours; then hadst thou not
Debas'd a Monarch in his People's Eyes,
Nor wak'd the Vengeance of an injur'd Queen.

ROSAMOND.

Alas, thou look'st on me as on a Wretch
Familiar with Pollution, reconcil'd
To harden'd Guilt, and all its shameless Arts;

I am

I am not such. Night's holy Lamps can witness
 What painful Sighs my sad afflicted Heart
 Hath heav'd, what streaming Tears my Eyes have pour'd,
 To be releas'd from the pernicious Snare
 Wherein I was involv'd!

QUEEN.

Those Sighs and Tears,
 Had true Contrition been their holy Source,
 Should have inspir'd thy Heart to break the Snare,
 And set itself at Freedom.

ROSAMOND.

O! 'tis true
 They should; but in my rebel Breast they found
 Too strong Resistance. Love hath been my Fault,
 My Bane, my Ruin; long he held entranc'd
 My fascinated Sense—
 O let this very Weakness plead my Cause
 Within your royal Breast; revolve, great Queen,
 How you have lov'd, and let those tender Feelings
 Win you to pity me!

QUEEN, *Aside.*

What Witchery
 Of Language hangs upon this *Circe's* Tongue?
 Why droops my Resolution? rouse thee, *Eleanor*,
 Remember the great Cause that brought thee hither,
 Nor let a Harlot's Sigh, or treach'rous Tear,
 Relax thy Fortitude.

ROSAMOND.

What shall I do
 To humble me yet lower in thy Sight?
 What Form of Language shall my Lips adopt
 To move thy Mercy? I confess my Crimes,
 Confess their Heinousness, and sue for Pardon:
 Can I do more? Ev'n Heav'n is won by Tears,
 By contrite Heart, and fervent Supplication;

Shalt

Shalt thou be harder to appease—O hear!
A Woman's Weakness claims a Woman's Pity,
Exert that Dignity of Soul that rises
Above Repentment to a pleaded Wrong,
And teach me how to make Atonement.

QUEEN.

Hence! [Aside.
Encroaching Weakness! coward Heart, abjure it—
Think on thy mighty Wrongs—Arm thee to meet
My Words with noble Firmness! Death alone,
Appeases *Eleanor's* insulted Love.

ROSAMOND.

Death, saidst thou?—Death!—O yet—

QUEEN.

Behold, Deluder!
I will not stain me in thy Blood; this Cup
Contains thy Doom.

ROSAMOND.

Oh! do not bid me die,
Steep'd as I am in Guilt; clos'd in a Convent,
Where Heav'n's clear Air and animating Light
Ne'er fond an Entrance, let me be condemn'd
To all the Hardships ever yet devis'd;
Or banish me to roam far-distant Realms,
Unfriendly Climates, and unsocial Wastes,
So thou afford me some remaining Hours
To reconcile my Soul to that great Summons,
When Heav'n shall to deign to call.

QUEEN.

Prophane no more
The Name of Heav'n with thy polluted Breath,
Thou who hast spurn'd its Laws! Justice demands
Thy forfeit Life. Thou shalt no more mislead

K

A Monarch's

A Monarch's noble Mind, no more devise
 Infiduous Arts, to work a Queen's Disgrace:
 Thou shalt not live to rob her of her Rights,
 Her Lord's Affection, and imperial Pride,
 That thou mayst seize the abdicated Seat,
 And Triumph in her Fall.

ROSAMOND.

By Heav'n's pure Grace,
 My Mind ne'er harbour'd such an impious Thought!

QUEEN.

Heap not fresh Crimes, thou hast enough already.

ROSAMOND.

Have I no Evidence on this side Heaven?
 And must I fall alone, unjustified?
 Where is the holy Abbot? Where my *Henry*?

QUEEN.

Thy *Henry*! thine!—That Word hath fir'd anew
 My failing Spirit. Drink!

ROSAMOND.

Yet, yet, relent——

QUEEN.

Drink! or this Poniard searches ev'ry Vein——

ROSAMOND.

Is there no Pity? None?—This awful Silence
 Hath answer'd me, and I entreat no more.
 Some greater Pow'r than thine demands my Life;
 Fate summons me; I hear, and I obey——
 O, Heav'n! if Crimes like mine may hope Forgiveness,
 Accept a contrite Heart!

[Drinks.]

QUEEN.

QUEEN,

O, beauteous Witch!
Hadst thou been less alluring, or had I
Forgot to Love, thou hadst not met this Fate. [*Aside.*]

ROSAMOND.

Thou art obey'd—Once more I bend before thee—
Nay harden not thy Heart to the last Accents
Of a poor Wretch, that hurries to her Grave.
Look, look upon me; I behold thee not
With unforgiving and resentful Eyes;
I deem thee but the destin'd Instrument
Of righteous Heav'n, to punish my Misdeeds.

QUEEN.

A Flood of Agony o'erwhelms my Soul,
And all my Pride and Rage is wash'd away [*Aside.*]

ROSAMOND.

Now cast an Eye of Pity on my Tears,
Now, in these awful, these tremendous Moments,
Thou canst not doubt my Truth. By my warm Hopes
Of Mercy at that Throne where all must bow,
My only Crime was Love. No Pow'r on Earth
Could have impell'd me to a further Wrong
Against thy State or Peace.

QUEEN.

I must believe thee—
What then remains for me? O rise, and wreak
Thy Vengeance on my now-renting Rage.
Behold these Tears—My Wrongs are all forgot—
Excess of Passion, Love, that knew no Bounds,
Drove me, with execrable Haste, to act—
What now I would resign all earthly Bliss
To have undone again.

KING.

68 HENRY THE SECOND.

KING, *within.*

Seize all that haunt
These winding Avenues—let none escape.

ROSAMOND.

Ah me! that Voice!

QUEEN.

'Tis *Henry's*—let him come,
And take his Share of Mis'ry.

Enter the KING, ETHELINDA, *and Attendants.*

KING.

Where, where is she?—
O fell, vindictive Fiend, what horrid Act
Hath thy dark Rage been dealing?

QUEEN.

Mad Revenge!

ETHELINDA.

Lo! the dread Means! all this my Mind foretold,
When the Queen's Train first met my startled Eye.

ROSAMOND.

Ev'n now my flitting Spirit is on the Wing;
The deadly Draught runs thro' my scorching Blood,
I feel it at my Heart—O! *Henry—Henry!*—

KING.

Malicious Rage, thou rid'st the Lightning's Flash
To execute thy Vengeance! *Ethelinda,*
Thy Zeal was cool, thy Expedition slow,
Compar'd to that fell Tyrant's rapid Heat.
Lift up thine Eyes—O! do not leave me yet—
Why melts Compassion in thy languid Look?

The

The Flames of Fury should be kindled there,
 'Gainst him, who left thee to invading Fate,
 Who saw not thy Distress, heard not thy Cries,
 When black Revenge was pouring Torments on thee!—
 O cruel Woman, unrelenting Fiend!—

ROSAMOND.

Calm, calm thy Mind; vent not thy Fury there,
 Her Wrongs cried loud, and her great Heart is wrapt
 In Sorrow for the Deed.

KING.

What now avails it?
 Compunction should have sprang when she beheld
 The streaming Tears course one another down
 Thy beauteous Cheek, and read the speechless Grief
 Of thy imploring Eyes.—O! was it thus
 I thought to see my *Rosamond* again!—
 Hath Fury, like an Eastern-Blast, destroy'd
 The sweetest, loveliest Flow'r that ever bloom'd?
 But I will die beside thee; never more
 Revisit chearful Day, nor dream of Comfort,
 When thou art parted from me.

ROSAMOND.

Cease, O! cease
 These useless Plainings; consecrate to Peace
 The few remaining Moments—nor let Rage
 Impel thy Soul to meditate Revenge
 For a poor Wretch, who justly thus atones
 Her numerous Crimes. O, royal *Eleanor*!
 Hear these last Accents—Howsoever I lov'd,
 However guilty I have seem'd to you,
 This very Night I had resolv'd to leave
 These fatal Walls, and, by my Father's Guidance,
 Devote my future Days to Penitence.

KING.

KING.

Doth not thy Blood, like mine, halt in thy Veins,
And chill the Seat of Life?

ROSAMOND.

Extend thy Pity,
(I cannot wrong thee further) grant me now
One Moment to indulge the tender Feelings
Of hapless Love, and breathe a fond Adieu,
Ere this poor harrafs'd Spirit quit my Breast.

KING.

Why this Compassion to the wretched Cause
Of all thy Miseries! I am the Source
Of ev'ry Pang, that feeds on thy lov'd Heart—
Of this thy fatal End.—Reproach, revile me—
Do any thing but look thus kindly on me,
And I will struggle with my mighty Woes,
Taught by thy great Example.

ROSAMOND.

O, my *Henry*!
Let not the sad Remembrance of my Fate
Sit on thy Heart, nor call my present State
A Misery; I wish'd some sure Retreat
From Grief and Shame, and Heav'n hath heard my Prayer.

QUEEN.

Unhappy Victim of my blinded Fury,
I almost envy thee thy present State;
Thou soon wilt be at Ease; while I must live
To all the Torments which a guilty Mind
Inflicts upon itself.

KING.

Canst thou feel thus,
Yet couldst remain obdurate to her Tears,
And deaf to her Intreaties?

QUEEN

QUEEN.

A Deed like this
Was foreign to my Heart, had not the Fraud
Been pour'd into my Ears, that I was meant
To be divorc'd for ever from thine Arms,
Be made an Outcast from thy Bed and Throne,
That she might rise my Substitute in all.

KING.

What black-soul'd Dæmon could possess thy Mind
With such a hellish Falshood?

QUEEN.

He—that Fiend!

CLIFFORD *brought on in his Disguise.*

KING.

Wretch, take thy Death.

ROSAMOND.

Forbear!

[*Faints.*]

CLIFFORD.

Strike, *Henry*, strike!
Why start'st thou back? I shrink not from the Blow;
New Woes assail me at that sinking Object,
And all thy Sword can do is Mercy now.

KING.

Thou, Night, in tenfold Darknefs close me round,
From that much-injur'd Form!

CLIFFORD.

My Child, my Child,
Awake, and let me once more hear thy Voice.
Speak, speak, my *Rosamond*; tell my sad Heart

What

72 HENRY THE SECOND;

What further Woe awaits it. Hath Affliction
Robb'd me of Sense, or do I fee the Pangs
Of ruthless Death within thy struggling Eye?

ROSAMOND.

Thou dost, my Father; let me blefs thy Goodness,
Ere Speech forsake me; thou art come to execute
Thy pious Promise—Fate prevents thy Care,
And I submit. My penitential Tears,
My Hopes of heav'nly Mercy, and thy Pardon,
Alleviate Death's sharp Terrors.

CLIFFORD.

O! what Hand
Hath robb'd me of the latest Ray of Hope,
That trembling glitter'd on my Eve of Life?

QUEEN.

In me behold the Murderer of thy Peace!
Vent thy Reproaches, load me with thy Curses,
I'll bear them all; high as I am in Rank,
And proud in Heart, I bend to make Atonement.
My Rage unsex'd me; and the dire Remembrance
Will ever haunt my Mind.

KING.

It will have Vent.
Lo, injur'd *Clifford*, *Henry* kneels before thee!
Henry, who spurn'd the holy Ties of Friendship,
The kindly Brotherhood of human Nature,
And robb'd thee of thy Child; yet let me mingle
My penitential with thy pious Tears
O'er this lov'd Form, for whom my Heart weeps Blood.

ROSAMOND.

Peace, Peace, a Moment! let my parting Spirit
Glide gently hence; Death hurries on apace.
O! wel-

O! welcome! hide me in thy peaceful Breast
 From the dread Horrors that surround me here.—
 Confusion, Shame, oppresses my languid Thoughts
 In this dread Moment.—Ye, much-injur'd, pour
 Compassion on me now! Thou, royal *Eleanor*—
 Thou best of Fathers—O forgive!—And thou,
 Beloved *Henry*!—Oh!— [Dies.]

KING.

Art thou then gone?—
 And did thy dying Looks and Words speak Pardon
 To thy Destroyer? In that parting Sigh,
 The meekest, kindest Spirit took its Flight
 That ever held Abode in human Breast.
 O, sorrowing *Clifford*! how shall I atone
 Thy bleeding Injuries?

CLIFFORD.

It needs not, *Henry*;
 My Child lies dead before me—'Tis enough—
 One Grave will hold us both—My failing Heart
 Had but few Drops of Life's warm Stream remaining,
 Grief soon will drink them all—

KING.

What now can Fate do more?
 Rain, Eyes, rain everlasting Floods of Tears
 O'er this sad Monument of lawless Love,

QUEEN.

If thy torn Heart can spare from its own Anguish
 A Moment's Respite, hear! Thou know'st me, *Henry*;
 Was Cruelty an Inmate of this Breast,
 When thou wert kind and constant? Think what Pangs
 I must have felt, ere wrought to this black Deed;

L

Let

Let that Reflection win one pitying Tear
For all my Sufferings, and I ask no more.

K I N G.

It shall be so; and we will reign together
In solemn, sad, uncomfortable Woe.

Q U E E N.

No, *Henry*, no; the Hand that's foul with Murder,
(Bear Witness, Heav'n!) shall ne'er be clos'd in thine.
To the sad Cloister and repentant Prayer
I give my future Life. Hail, gloomy Shades!
Ye best besit the execrable Wretch,
Who, daring to assume the Bolts of Vengeance,
Dealt Desolation with unbounded Fury,
And shew'd the Faults she meant to punish slight,
Compar'd to her, and her atrocious Crimes. [*Exit Queen.*]

K I N G.

In this great Deed thou hast out-gone thy *Henry*,
Peace to thy troubled Soul! Ye hapless Pair,
Accept these Tears, for ever will they flow,
While Memory recalls this dreadful Scene.

Here let the gay Seducer turn his Eyes,
And see the dread Effects of lawless Love:
Learn, 'tis no single Crime, the Mischief spreads
To all the dearest Ties of social Life.
Not only the deluded Virgin's Heart
Falls the sad Victim of his trait'rous Art,
But oft, a Prey to one licentious Deed,
The Friend, the Lover, and the Parent bleed.

EPILOGUE,

Written by G. COLMAN, Esq.

Spoken by Miss BARSANTI.

GREAT and fair Ladies! Lords gallant and mighty!
Behold a Female—fresh from Otaheite.
Stretch to the Southern Ocean your Idea,
And view, in me, the Princess Oberea.

Full three long Hours I've sat, with smother'd Rage,
To hear the Nonsense of your tragick Stage,
To see a Queen majestically swagger,
A Bowl in this Hand, and in this a Dagger;
To stab or poison (cruel Inclination!)
A Maid, who gave a Husband Consolation.

Al, Ladies! no such Queen at Otaheite;
Love there has Roses—without Thorns to fright ye;
Frolick our Days, and to compleat our Joy,
A Coterie's form'd—'tis call'd the Arreoy,
Where Love is free and general as the Air,
And ev'ry Beau gallants with ev'ry Fair;
No Ceremonies bind, no Rule controuls
But Love, the only Tyrant of our Souls!

But Pleasure's foreign to these Northern Climes,
And Love, I hear, unknown in these dull Times:
Never was Maiden in these Days caught tripping,
Never was Wife on Pleasure's Ice found slipping:
True to their Lords, to Gallantry ne'er prone,
Divorces are so rare, the Name's scarce known.

Yet

*Yet in our Southern Air—at least I'm told—
Nor French nor Englishmen were quite so cold;
And, if your Poet of to-night say true,
Love formerly warm'd British Ladies too;
And Ladies of old Times perhaps might plead,
That modern Ladies are the self-same Breed.*

*There is a Place, I'm told, call'd Doctor's Commons,
Whence Husbands issue to false Wives dread Summons;
For each pretends, an all-sufficient Elf,
To keep a Lady to his precious Self.
Yet Man, proud Man, from Oberea know,
That female Follies on your Follies grow;
And all your Hopes of Constancy are vain,
If Marriage binds not in a mutual Chain.
If in cold Sheets ye leave poor Nell to sleep,
And some fair Rose in Covent-Garden keep;
Think of the Ills that wait domestic Strife,
The heaviest Care of all the Cares of Life—
A tempting Mistress, and an angry Wife!*

*For you, ye Fair, whom conscious Virtue arms,
And with her Graces heightens Beauty's Charms,
Hear a frail Sister on your Pity call,
And save fair Rosamond a second Fall!*



F I N I S.

IN THE PRESS,

And on the Fifth of *February*, 1774, will be published,

By the AUTHOR of this PLAY,

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This Day is published,

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OF

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London: printed for John Bell, near Exeter Change, in the Strand, and C. Etherington, at York.

Mr. BELL,

I have purchased your edition of Shakespeare's Acting Plays, with which I am abundantly pleased. Your promises were large, but your execution has been greater, and I heartily hope that success will not be slow, in rewarding so spirited a performance. Works of elegance, though eagerly sought
after

BELL'S SHAKESPEARE.

after in foreign countries, are rarely to be met with in our own; the causes have been differently assigned, but the present work plainly proves, that they proceed not so much from a dearth of abilities, as from a want of spirit to encourage them.—You have opened the road to excellence, and I doubt not but your fellow traders, though they have not spirit to project, will have means enough to follow your steps.—Should this be the case, as I have some private reasons to believe it will, with this very publication, you may rest assured, that the Public will always advert to the primary cause, and support your improvements, in spite of every undue influence which their extensive connections may be supposed to effect.

I have sent a copy of the following Criticisms, which are not my own sentiments alone, but those of all whom I have conversed with on the subject, to the St. James's Chronicle, which with this letter, you are at liberty to make what use of you think proper, without offending

your friend and well-wisher,

January 17, 1774.

W. R.

J. Bell's *respectful acknowledgements to the writer of the above, and as it, together with the following, contains such flattering testimonies of candid approbation, he hopes he shall stand excused by the Writer, and justified by the Public, for communicating both in this manner, without trespassing on the confidence of either.*

CRITIQUE on Part of the PLATES in BELL's Edition of SHAKESPEARE.

Excellent engraving is a beauty of itself, and will always to the generality of people appear an ornament, independent of the design, or other qualities, of a good print. The French seem to have understood this better than any other nation.

In imitation of the magnificent editions of the Louvre, they have bedecked their ordinary books with cuts, signets, medallions, head and tail pieces; in the execution of which lies all their merit. Neatness and propriety strike at once a superficial eye, and therefore aiding their language with *the bagatelles* I have mentioned, the Parisians are thought to have sold more books than any three cities in Europe.

An edition of Shakespeare's acting plays being lately advertised, I had the curiosity to glance at the proposals, but coming to that part of the advertisement, where five volumes, with *elegant plates*, are offered for fifteen shillings, I pitied Shakespeare, and thought no more of the work. They are now published, and afford a happy instance of what the public are to expect from a bookfeller, who has spirit to share his profits with artists of merit. I had often thought of writing some-

BELL'S SHAKESPEARE.

thing upon the present subject, and cannot, without injustice, pass this new edition in silence.

With exception of one or two at most, these plates are highly finished, finished with freedom and force, united to the admired neatness of the French *Burin*. I am sorry the designs are not, upon the whole, equal to the execution. though many of them merit the highest applause; and since I have criticised the plates of former editions, I shall make equally free with the present, and praise or blame, where, in my opinion, either is deserved.

Othello gives no idea of the noble Moor. The expression of jealousy is too ambiguous and strong to be marked with success in miniature; he looks not like an injured soldier, but an old enraged eunuch of the seraglio. *Iago* is an excellent figure, his action steady, the attitude speaks design, and the eye watches the effect of his villainy upon the unhappy husband.

Brutus and the *Evil Genius* would not make the ghost of a Roman between them; it is a bad print, and no part of it better than another.

Rosalind and her companion, in the comedy of *As you like it*, is one of the sweetest cuts I remember to have seen; the action is well chosen, the expression just, and the execution delicate as the subject. The softness of the sex shines through the masculine dress, and finely conveys the idea of the poet. Had the trees in the back ground been executed with a little more care, and the keeping better preserved, this print would have been a master-piece.

Every person must be pleased with *Pistol* in *Henry the fifth*: the design is good, the action natural—the expression strong, and the execution superior to any poetical cut I ever saw in an English publication.

Iachimo and *Imogen* deserve great approbation; the scene is dumb show, therefore capable of being perfectly represented: accordingly, the *sang-froid* of the Italian, taking an inventory of the lady's beauty, is nicely hit—she sleeps well; her posture is natural, and the execution fleshy and delicate.

The delivery of the letter in *Henry the Eighth*, must also give universal satisfaction; there is a great deal of character in the king and *Wolsey*, and what is further commendable, they are portraits of these personages. *Wolsey* receives the letter with a courtly smile, in place of that stupefaction visible in the Cardinal of Gravelot, before its contents were known.

Falstaff assuming the conquest of *Percy*, is a pleasant high-finished cut; *Sir John* recalls rather too much the idea of Mr. Shuter in that part, but the youth and gallant figure of the prince is happily struck, and the fallen *Percy* judiciously shortened. I think he should have retained something of the terrible in death.

Dedier

BELL'S SHAKESPEARE.

Doctor Caius, Mrs. Quickly, and Simple, in the Merry Wives of Windsor, are truly comic, well conceived, and convey the very spirit of the scene; the execution is equal to the design, and make together a very perfect print.

Mr. *Grignion* has been very happy in the frontispiece for *Much ado about Nothing*—His etching gives a peculiar spirit to a print, where he is pleased to bestow pains and the arch smile in the face of the prince and *Leonato*, in pretended conference, demands the attention of an actor.

The feelings of old *Lear*, are finely marked; the figure, though small, is dignified; and poor *Tom* almost shivers upon the paper.

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